BBC

40-PAGE SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVALS GUIDE!

Your essential companion to the biggest and best events in the UK and beyond

music

The world's best-selling classical music magazine

400th ISSUE!

Join our special celebration

see p36

Errollyn Wallen

The composer tells us why sea, sky and solitude are key to her magical soundworld

The Requiem

The art of death: from violent Verdi to blissful Brahms

Also in this issue…

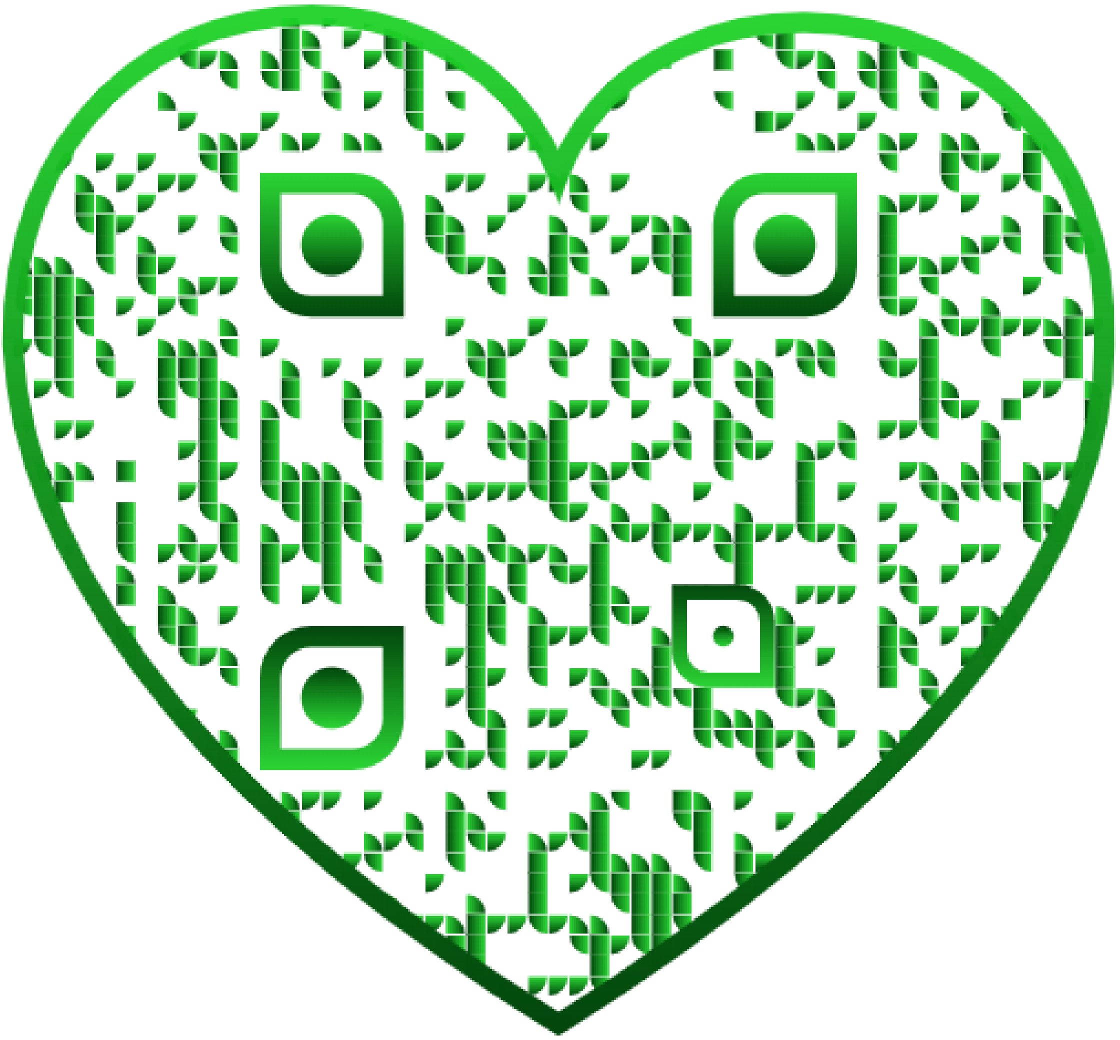
Mark Elder reflects on his glorious Hallé career

What larks! Are birds our greatest composers?

Why the classical music world is heading to Ibiza

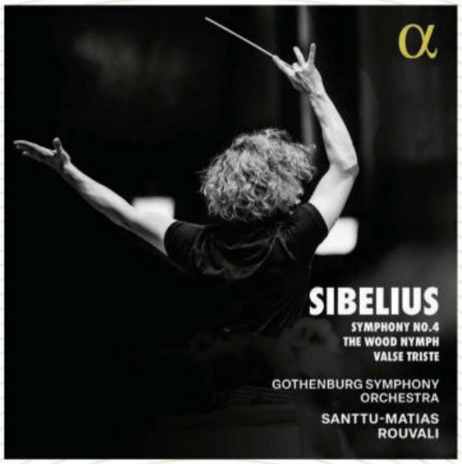
100 reviews by the world's finest critics

Recordings & books – see p110



α
ALPHA-CLASSICS.COM
NEW RELEASES

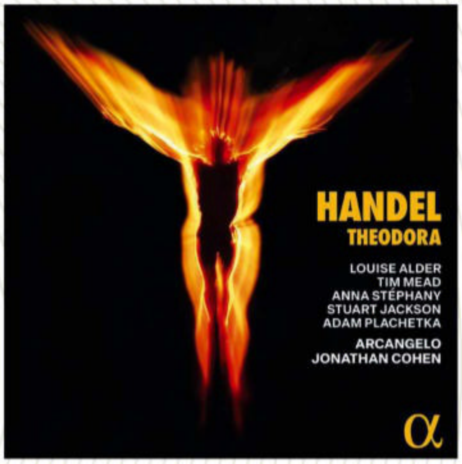
ALPHA 1019



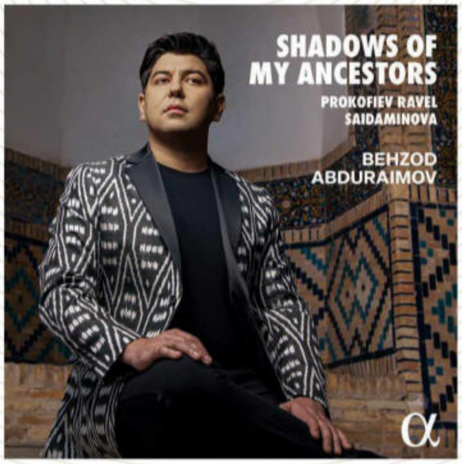
ALPHA 1008

ALPHA 772

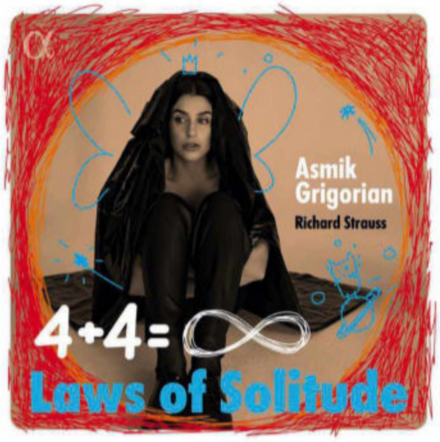
ALPHA 1021



ALPHA 1025



ALPHA 1028



ALPHA 1046

DISTRIBUTED IN THE UK BY RSK ENTERTAINMENT & IN THE US BY NAXOS OF AMERICA, INC.

oh MUSIC
outhere MUSIC

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES
Tel: +44 (0)117 300 8752
Email: music@classical-music.com
Post: The editor, BBC Music Magazine, Eagle House, Bristol BS1 4ST

SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES
Tel: 03330 162 118
Web: buysubscriptions.com/contactus
Post: BBC Music Magazine, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton

Follow us on Twitter
@musicmagazine

Like us on Facebook
facebook.com/classicalmagazine

Find us online
classical-music.com

Subscribe to our podcast

Subscribe today to *BBC Music Magazine*
Save money on newsstand prices!
See p10 for our fantastic offer

Welcome

Three important profiles are at the heart of this month's issue, though at first glance there might seem little – aside from talent and drive – to connect award-winning composer Errollyn Wallen, conductor Mark Elder, who steps down this season after a quarter-century as the Hallé's music director, and soprano Carolyn Sampson, celebrating her 50th birthday with a staggering 100th release. But more than a deep dedication to their art, all three describe the importance of discovering and, crucially, developing a personal voice.

Wallen has challenged the established notion of what a composer should be to develop an original style, drawn from multiple sources. Sampson resisted attempts to mould her bright and wittily expressive voice to heavier operatic fare in her youth. Elder, meanwhile, took a rudderless Hallé and developed a flexible and radiant sound, worthy of his lofty desire to helm 'the greatest orchestra in the world for playing the music of our country'. But though all three are now mature artists, there is no desire to bask in the glories of the past. Instead, they speak of ongoing artistic growth.

'Mature' can also describe *BBC Music Magazine* itself, which this month celebrates its 400th issue! Join us for a walk down memory lane on page 36. But we're still full of the joys of spring, with a bumper Festival Guide on page 56 and a look at music inspired by birdsong on page 42.

Charlotte Smith *Editor*

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

Kate Wakeling
Writer and musicologist

'It was a total thrill to interview Errollyn Wallen for this month's issue. Our conversation ranged from cantatas to poetry to BBC *Question Time* to cake (for breakfast), and was a delight from start to finish.' ***Page 26***

Tom Stewart
Writer and editor

'I've always loved birds and have spent more time than I'd like to admit listening out for them. It was a treat to hear from a performer, a composer and an ornithologist about birdsong and its influence on music.' ***Page 42***

Paul Riley
Journalist and critic

'There's an element of nosiness that turns to unbridled fantasy as the annual trawl of festivals beckons. Ravel in Ravenna? Opera under a desert night sky? We can dream, however forlornly… there's always next year!' ***Page 54***

Visit **Classical-Music.com** for the very latest from the music world

Contents

MAY 2024

FEATURES

26 **Cover:** Errollyn Wallen
From solitude to wild inspiration, the composer tells *Kate Wakeling* the secrets of her award-winning success

36 The Big 400!
We celebrate the 400th issue of *BBC Music Magazine* with a flick through some of those we made earlier...

42 Avian anthems
Tom Stewart listens out carefully for the various ways that composers have represented birdsong in music

46 Music to die for
From raging Verdi to blissful Brahms, the range of Requiem settings is rich indeed, says *Jeremy Pound*

50 The mighty Sampson
Soprano Carolyn Sampson raises a glass to a major milestone in the company of *Ashutosh Khandekar*

54 Festivals 2024
Your 40-page guide to the best events of the summer!

EVERY MONTH

8 Letters

12 The Full Score
The latest news and interviews from the music world

25 Richard Morrison

32 The BBC Music Magazine Interview
Conductor Sir Mark Elder talks to *Tom Service*

98 Musical Destinations
Claire Jackson on Ibiza's lively classical music scene

100 Composer of the Month
The badly underrated Sergei Taneyev, by *Daniel Jaffé*

106 Building a Library
Paul Riley is thrilled by Monteverdi's *Il Combattimento*

140 Radio & TV

144 Crossword and Quiz

146 Music that Changed Me
Conductor Kent Nagano

BBC RADIO 3
May Radio 3 highlights
See p140

26 Errollyn Wallen

COVER: JOHN MILLAR **THIS PAGE:** JOHN MILLAR, BEN EALOVEGA, ALI WRIGHT, SIM CANETTY-CLARKE

BBC music MAGAZINE

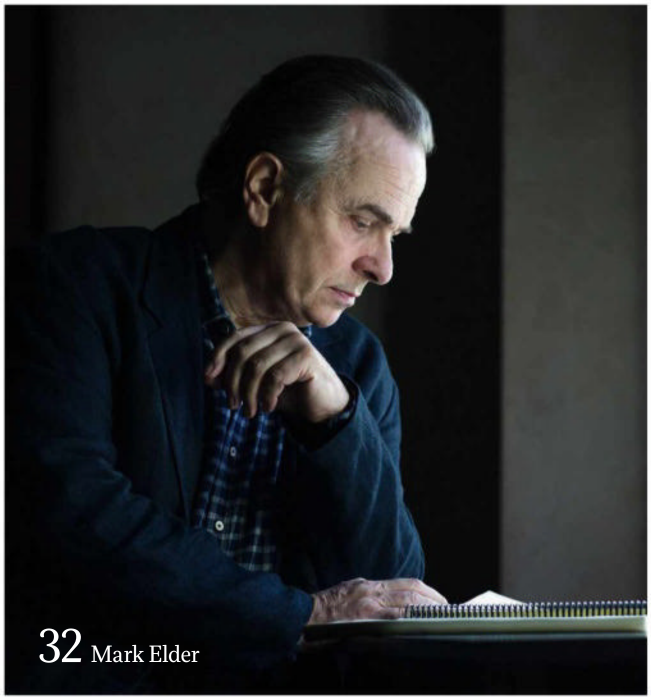
Subscriptions £64.87 (UK); £65 (Europe); £74 (Rest of World) ABC Reg No. 3122

EDITORIAL
Plus our favourite birdsong (see p42)
Editor Charlotte Smith
Australian Magpie
Deputy editor Jeremy Pound
Collared Dove
Acting reviews editor Steve Wright
Willow Warbler
Acting content producer Freya Parr
Kookaburra
Cover CD editor Alice Pearson
Wren
Art editor Dav Ludford
Blackbird

Thanks to
Jenny Price, Hannah Nepilova, Rebecca Franks

MARKETING
Subscriptions director
Jacky Perales-Morris
Direct marketing manager Kellie Lane
Subscriptions marketing coordinator
Dennis Awdziejczyk

ADVERTISING
Advertisement manager
Rebecca Janyshiwskyj
+44 (0)117 300 8547
Commercial brand leads
Rebecca Yirrell +44 (0)117 300 8811
Rebecca O'Connell +44 (0)117 300 8814
Client solutions manager
Tom Houlden +44 (0)117 300 8203
Brand sales executives
Willem Curran +44 (0)117 300 8534



32 Mark Elder

54 Festivals Guide 2024

James Phillips +44 (0)117 300 8224
Inserts
Laurence Robertson +353 876 902208
SYNDICATION & LICENSING
Tim Hudson +44 (0)20 7150 5170
Richard Bentley +44 (0)20 7150 5168
PRODUCTION
Production director Sarah Powell
Production coordinator
Emily Mounter
Ad coordinator Molly Websdell
Ad designers
Cee Pike, Andrew Hobson
Reprographics
Tony Hunt, Chris Sutch
PUBLISHING
Brand leader
Rosa Sherwood
Managing director
Andrew Davies
Group managing director
Andy Marshall
BBC STUDIOS, UK PUBLISHING
Chair, editorial review boards
Nicholas Brett
Managing director, consumer products and licensing
Stephen Davies
Global director, magazines
Mandy Thwaites
Compliance manager
Cameron McEwan
UK publishing co-ordinator
Eva Abramik

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD
Jack Furness, Janet Tuppen,
Adam Barker, Philip Raperport

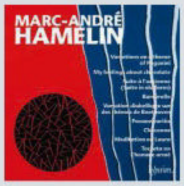
This magazine is published by Our Media Company Bristol Limited under licence from BBC Studios

May reviews

Your guide to the best new recordings and books

Pianist Marc-André Hamelin performs his own music

110 Recording of the Month



Marc-André Hamelin
New Piano Works

'The sensory experience of a sweet treat is beautifully translated by Marc-André Hamelin into pools of sound'

112 Orchestral 116 Concerto 120 Opera
122 Choral & Song 125 Chamber 128 Instrumental
132 Jazz 134 Brief Notes 136 Books 137 Audio
138 From the Archive 139 Reviews Index

Subscribe today to BBC Music Magazine
Save money on newsstand prices!
See p10 for our fantastic offer

Have your say…

Write to: The editor, BBC Music Magazine, Eagle House, Bristol, BS1 4ST
Email: music@classical-music.com Social media: contact us on Facebook and Twitter

LETTER *of the* MONTH

Wrong direction: Neville Marriner had a Newport shocker

Beware your agent

In the early 1950s, Neville Marriner (see April issue), pianist Antony Hopkins and violinist Alan Loveday travelled the country to play trios at local music societies. I recall the chairman of the Newport (Shropshire) Music Society announcing shortly before their concert was about to begin that there would be a late start but the Trio were 'on their way'. After 45 minutes or so, Marriner came on to the platform to apologise. Their agent had told them their venue was Newport... but had sent them to Newport (Monmouth) in error. Quite how they managed to hurtle for a late start to the correct venue in the days before motorways goodness knows, but Hopkins had a reputation for driving fast cars so maybe he was at the wheel. During his apology and explanation, Marriner asked, in the circumstances, the indulgence of the audience if the Trio did not change into concert dress.
***Bryan Lewis,** Ratby*

WIN! £50 VOUCHER FOR PRESTO MUSIC

Every month we will award the best letter with a **£50 voucher** for **Presto Music**, the UK's leading e-commerce site for classical and jazz recordings, printed music, music books and musical instruments. Please note: the editor reserves the right to shorten letters for publication.

prestomusic

GETTY

Horn of plenty

I was fascinated by *The Magnificent Seven* (April), in which Ben Goldscheider chose seven works he admires for French horn. Reading it reminded me of a particular work for horn and orchestra that I heard broadcast many years ago, finding it haunting and profound. I have longed to hear it again. It is *Actaeon* by Richard Rodney Bennett. Unfortunately, this work doesn't appear to be available in any form, so a modern recording is long overdue. I wonder whether Ben Goldscheider might investigate it and, hopefully, record it?
***Richard Howard,** Banstead*

Silent study

Steve Wright (*15 musical works to study to*; March) suggests that those who prefer to study in quietness might enjoy Cage's *4'33"*, which he dubs 'the sound of silence'. Ironically, this is the opposite of Cage's intention. His thoughts on 'silence' were prompted by a visit to the totally soundproofed chamber at Harvard University which absorbs all sounds made in the room. Cage entered the chamber expecting to hear silence, but as he wrote later, he 'heard two sounds, one high and one low. When I described them to the engineer in charge, he informed me that the high one was my nervous system in operation, the low one my blood in circulation.' Whether that is true or not, it is this presence of sounds in the silence that Cage wants people to engage with in *4'33"*. Of course, it has led to a debate on whether sounds per se constitute music. Composers from Beethoven to Rautavaara have incorporated birdsong and other sounds from the natural world into their music, while composers from Haydn to Honegger have included mechanical sounds from clocks to trains in theirs. More recently, composers such as Antheil and Delia Derbyshire have taken everyday sounds and integrated them into their music. Ultimately, we all have the facility to block out sounds both everyday and musical, leaving us free to study in the way we find most helpful.
***David Archer,** York*

Inflexible Rule

Reading your article regarding Sheku Kanneh-Mason's views on 'Rule, Britannia!' (*The Full Score*, March), it does seem odd that the BBC is immovable on the subject. Times are changing, and the BBC Proms have to change too. I wonder how many of those who regularly attend the Proms, or support them via listening on radio or watching on television, actually give two hoots whether 'Rule, Britannia!' is performed or not. I remember the furore over the song possibly being performed as an instrumental in 2020, and the

news reports showing protests regarding the issue – not one person interviewed was able to tell the reporter even the first line of the first verse, such was their adoration of the piece. What's more, it's worth reiterating that the Last Night as we now know it was actually moulded by Sir Malcolm Sargent rather than Sir Henry Wood. The BBC Proms archive shows us that even *Jerusalem* wasn't included in the Last Night until 1953. It is likely that 'Rule, Britannia!' is on borrowed time, and I wonder if the change of director for next year's Proms will be the moment that it is dropped.
Shane Brown, *Norwich*

Core of the Big Apple: Dizzy Gillespie plays in New York, c1948

Swede success

It was great to read about Robert von Bahr's BIS CD label in February (*BBC Music Magazine Interview*). He has done so much wonderful work for composers and musicians, but he didn't mention his ongoing project that has excited and enthralled me for many years – his promotion of Sweden's greatest composer, Allan Pettersson (1911–80), has been magnificent. Von Bahr knew Pettersson personally and he started recording his symphonies with the brilliant Norrköping Symphony Orchestra and Leif Segerstam, but after three releases of six of the 17 symphonies, the project seemed to stall. To the rescue came trombonist and conductor Christian Lindberg, whose discovery of Pettersson's work was revelatory for him. Von Bahr and Lindberg created 'The Allan Pettersson Project' with the Norrköping team with the aim of recording all the orchestral works afresh. It has been a tremendous success and is nearing completion, and going to Norrköping to attend the outstanding Lindberg concerts that have preceded the recordings has been a privilege. Von Bahr's commitment to the stunning music of Pettersson has enabled my musical obsession to flourish!
Derek Bacon, *Barnsley*

Pay fair for fair play

While congratulations are in order for Robert von Bahr's success over 50 years, I was dumbfounded to understand the contradictions between his idea of respecting the musicians and his history of strong-arming unions. As someone who has been an active, working musician in New York for almost 30 years, I can tell you that we never would have achieved the level of pay we have here without standing up stronger for our right to be compensated. I'm amazed that despite admitting to be highly profitable, he takes such pride in having thrown the unions aside in Sweden in the 1980s. Would those musicians, if given a chance to be quoted, feel so strongly and proud of the race to the bottom that they set off? This is also around the time that the LSO undercut the LA recording studios to record the first *Star Wars* soundtrack. While Von Bahr undoubtedly has advanced many musicians' careers, I'd say there's another side to the story that isn't being told. It is always going to be a difficult balance between getting new music recorded and compensating musicians who have worked very hard to get where they are. I just wonder whether being so cavalier about the finances of it serves the musicians as well as you make it sound.
Greg Smith, *New York*

Wild about Oscar

I fell in love with Gershwin 60 years ago, and have admired Oscar Levant (*He's got rhythm*; February) almost as long. His three books on music and all of the people he knew are both hilarious and sad, the latter because of the toll that his addictions took on his life. My own belief is that he suffered from 'coffee psychosis'. He may have been neurotic to begin with, but consuming 20 cups of coffee a day probably made everything worse. If you watch *An American in Paris*, he always has a cup of coffee in his hand. It is unfortunate that his music has basically been lost. I think part of the reason for that is that he studied with Schoenberg. I have ancient recordings of his Piano Concerto and Sonatina. They indicate a talent that would have been better served by a composer interested in melody and emotion, rather than dry theory. But he wanted to be taken seriously as a composer, and not seen as a Gershwin knock off. There has been only one modern recording of any of his music – *Caprice* – and it represents perfectly the dual nature of his musical personality. It begins with a Schoenbergian wail in the darkness, before suddenly becoming a jazzy, fun and Gershwin-esque romp.
Ben Janken, *via email*

Manhattan sound

Say it ain't so, Tom! In his February column (*Start spreading the music...*), a tribute to Manhattan's contributions to music, Tom Service included downtown and midtown but omitted uptown, Harlem, jazz, etc, possibly America's greatest contribution to and impact upon the world of music.
The wider world might not recognise or remember Steve Reich (no offence) but knows immediately Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie etc. The impact on classical music from the Harlem Renaissance is huge. Ironic that the same issue features Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* – if this piece of music is not the epitome of the marriage of classical music with jazz, I'll eat my baton.
Susan Brooks, *NC, US*

BBC music MAGAZINE

FREE ONE MONTH TRIAL
to the digital edition

Available from

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google play

amazon apps Available on kindle fire

BBC Music Magazine is a must-read for anyone with a passion for classical music. Every issue brings the world of classical music to life, from interviews with the greatest artists and features on fascinating subjects, to all the latest news and opinions from around the music world.

Have BBC Music Magazine delivered straight to your device

when you take out a one month FREE trial* subscription to the digital edition.
Simply return to the home page to subscribe.

*After your one month trial your subscription will continue at £2.99 per month

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google play

amazon apps Available on kindle fire

BBC music MAGAZINE

The *full* score

Our pick of the month's news, views and interviews

Coastal conductor: Mark Wigglesworth will begin his new post in September

Bournemouth batons

The BSO's chief conductors

Dan Godfrey *(1893-1934)*
Richard Austin *(1934-39)*
Montague Birch *(1939-47)*
Rudolf Schwarz *(1947-51)*
Charles Groves *(1951-61)*
Constantin Silvestri *(1962-69)*
Paavo Berglund *(1972-79)*
Uri Segal *(1980-82)*
Rudolf Barshai *(1982-88)*
Andrew Litton *(1988-94)*
Yakov Kreizberg *(1995-2000, above)*
Marin Alsop *(2002-08)*
Kirill Karabits *(2009–present)*

Wigglesworth takes on BSO top job

Bournemouth names Englishman as chief conductor

The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra has announced Mark Wigglesworth as its new chief conductor. The 59 year-old will begin the role from the start of the 2024/25 season, taking over from the Ukrainian Kirill Karabits, who has proved a hugely popular figure in his 15 years in charge of the south-coast ensemble.

Wigglesworth will be no stranger to his new orchestra, having been its principal guest conductor since November 2021. He also comes with a wealth of experience, with previous positions including principal conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (1996-2000) and principal guest conductor of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra (1998-2001). Also a regular in the pit at the opera, he was appointed music director of English National Opera in September 2015 but resigned just six months later, reasoning that 'the company is evolving now into something I do not recognise'.

The Bournemouth principal guest conductor vacancy created by Wigglesworth's upward move will be filled by Chloé van Soeterstède who, like him, has signed a four-year contract. A former Dudamel Fellow with the LA Philharmonic, the 36-year-old French conductor has worked with leading orchestras across Europe and, in 2012, founded the London-based chamber orchestra Arch Sinfonia.

Wigglesworth comes to Bournemouth with a wealth of experience

Karabits, meanwhile, will by no means be casting off from Bournemouth and sailing off with his beloved fishing rods into the sunset. Instead, he will be maintaining his links with the orchestra as its conductor laureate and artistic director of Voices from the East, the BSO programme which celebrates music that has not previously been performed by major European orchestras.

It is, in fact, his work in championing East European repertoire that has now been recognised with the award of an Honorary OBE for services to music. 'I am deeply grateful to receive this Honorary OBE for the journey I have been privileged to share with the BSO's musicians and audiences over the past 15 years,' he says. 'I'm deeply proud of what we have achieved together.'

SIM CANETTY-CLARKE, GETTY

Bonang goes Pythagoras's theory of numerical harmony

Did Pythagoras get it wrong? In the 6th century BC, the great polymath showed that certain numerical ratios between sounds are what makes music sound pleasant to us – and dissonance occurs when there's a deviation from such ratios. But scientists in the US and UK now suggest that imperfections are also attractive, especially when heard on instruments less familiar to Western ears. 'With instruments like the bonang,' says Dr Peter Harrison of Cambridge University, 'Pythagoras's special numbers go out the window and we encounter entirely new patterns of consonance and dissonance.'

THE MONTH IN NUMBERS

1

...extra performance of Handel's *Giulio Cesare* (above) added to Glyndebourne's summer schedule in the light of record-breaking pre-season ticket sales.

100,000

...pounds in new grants to be awarded by the Continuo Foundation to 27 period instrument ensembles across the UK.

14

...female singers silenced, as St John's College Cambridge announces the controversial closure of its popular St John's Voices choir.

396

...per cent rise in musicians seeking consultations for mental health since Covid, says the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine.

GETTY ILLUSTRATION: JONTY CLARK

SoundBites

California exit: Esa-Pekka Salonen found no love-in in San Francisco

Golden Gate departure

Esa-Pekka Salonen says he will not be continuing as music director of the San Francisco Symphony when his contract expires next year. 'I do not share the same goals for the future of the institution as the Board of Governors does,' was the blunt explanation from the Finnish conductor, who was also recently named as the recipient of the 2024 Polar Music Prize. The orchestra's players have since issued a statement expressing their 'sadness' at his decision.

Generous conductor

Happier times, however, at the Orchestre National de Lille, which has just named Joshua Weilerstein as its next music director. 'Joshua Weilerstein conducts the greatest orchestras around the world,' says the French ensemble about the American, who is also chief conductor of the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra in Denmark. 'His project is fully in line with the values of our orchestra: openness, excellence and generosity.'

Jolly good fellow

Sir James MacMillan has been awarded the Academy Fellowship, the highest honour bestowed by the Ivors Academy. On receiving the award in a presentation at The Barbican in March, the Scottish composer said that he will 'take this opportunity to rededicate my energies to the power of music and its mysterious ability to transform lives.'

Doh! Re Mi...

An unlikely classical-meets-hip hop collaboration envisaged in *The Simpsons* 28 years ago is set to become reality when Cypress Hill joins the London Symphony Orchestra on stage at the Royal Albert Hall this summer. Ever since the episode *Homerpalooza* depicted the two groups playing together at an alternative rock festival back in 1996, there has been a running gag that maybe such a meeting will happen one day. And on 10 July, it now will.

Rising Stars

Three to look out for…

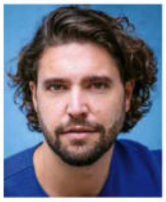
Xiaowen Shang *Pianist*

Born: Beijing, China
Career highlight: April 2024 is set to be the highlight of my career – it sees the release of my debut album *Music of Silence* and I will also be performing twice at Wigmore Hall, as pianist and harpsichordist.
Musical hero: JS Bach, who motivates me to explore the musical world; and Brahms, whose music comforts and calms me down.
Dream concert: I would love to perform at the National Gallery – pianist Myra Hess's performances there during World War II remind me what artists can do.

Laure Chan *Violinist*

Born: London, UK
Career highlight: Recording my latest concerto album at Abbey Road Studios, and making my solo debut at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall in New York in December 2023.
Musical heros: At nine years old, I heard Maxim Vengerov at the Barbican. I was mesmerised by his virtuosity and charisma – that was when I decided to become a violinist. Among composers, Bach, Mozart, Tchaikovsky and Brahms have always deeply moved and inspired me.
Dream concert: I'd love to play at Wigmore Hall, in a diverse programme including original compositions and music inspired by my cultural roots and featuring both Western classical and Chinese folk instruments.

Christian Reif *Conductor*



Born: Rosenheim, Germany
Career highlight: Working with artists and ensembles that I love always results in natural, special music-making. One example was Julia Bullock's *Walking In The Dark*, for which I conducted and played piano. It was a reflection of the intense times in which we lived during 2020/21, so the Grammy Award was a nice recognition.
Musical heros: Various, but always with the same qualities: living with genuine curiosity, communicating with warmth and bringing out the best in people.
Dream concert: A programme that touches and inspires audience members. And the venue? As long as it has good acoustics, it could be anywhere!

TIMEPIECE This month in history

A night at the opera: Glyndebourne founder John Christie enjoys an interval chat, 1939

MAY 1934

Posh frocks and *Figaro* for Glyndebourne's first night

In January 1934, the *Sussex Agricultural Express* reported that two cows owned by 'Captain Christie' of Glyndebourne were trophy winners at a local show. On 25 May, the same journal raised readers' sights a little higher by observing that John Christie's new opera house at Glyndebourne 'may… one day be the Mecca of opera lovers in this country'.

A former Eton science teacher possessed of an inherited fortune, Christie was offering opera-goers a high-quality experience (in the wilds of Sussex) rare on the cash-strapped UK musical scene. Rumours of what was afoot were circulating the previous autumn, although baritone Roy Henderson recalled 50 years later that 'everybody thought it was crazy'.

Henderson nonetheless signed up to sing the Count under Fritz Busch's baton in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* – Glyndebourne's opener on 28 May. He'd been auditioned, he recalled, by Busch's assistant, Hans Oppenheim: 'Oppenheim said, "Yes, good voice… but can he act?" "Of course he can act," said John Christie, "he's a cricketer!"'

A giggle, yes, but one which reflected the standards Busch and Christie demanded. Cast and chorus in the opening season (which also featured Mozart's *Così fan tutte*) were indeed expected to act convincingly, eschewing the stand-and-sing bedevilling UK

opera productions. The charismatic stage director Carl Ebert (who, like Busch, was an exile from Nazi Germany) saw to that.

That cast featured a German, an Austrian and a Finn alongside other leading British singers such as Heddle Nash and Norman Allin. Christie's soprano wife, Audrey Mildmay, sang Susanna. As their lengthy rehearsal period progressed, remembered Henderson, 'we began to see this was going to be a real ensemble of artists, something we hadn't experienced before. It made such an impression. We knew exactly what to do.'

Christie's PR dexterity is evidenced in the newspaper coverage across the country as opening night approached. The *Birmingham Gazette*, for example: 'The new "pocket opera house" at Glyndebourne, I am told, is receiving even greater attention in German and Austrian musical circles than it is here.' 'Crescendo' in the *Daily News* remarked that, 'The stage is Mr Christie's pet joy. Here every gadget known to the ingenuity of man has been installed, on the stage, above it and underneath it.'

Finally, the cast rehearsed with what was essentially the LSO. Roy Henderson was astounded by their sound under Busch. 'I'd never heard them play like it. Busch's rhythm was superb. And things were done at a singable pace. You can't phrase at the speed they take nowadays.'

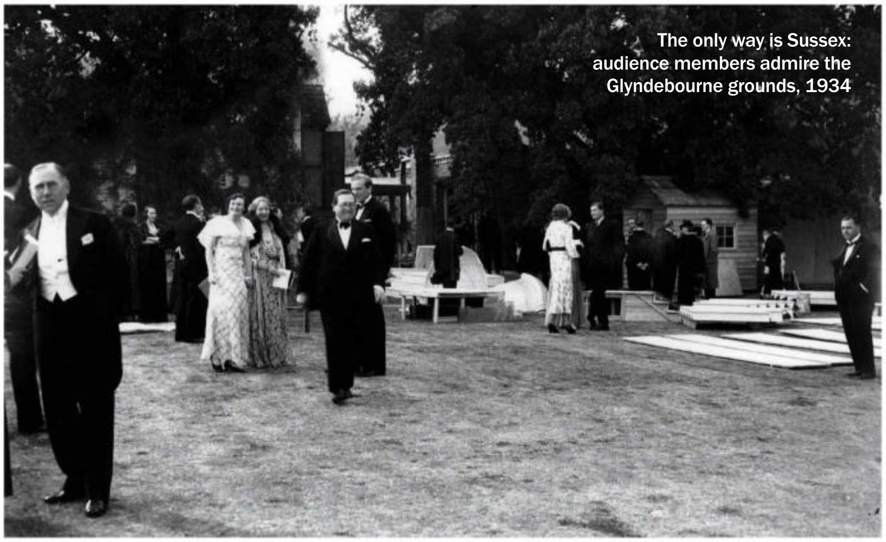
And so to that first night. Ticket-holders were expected to dress to the nines 'out of respect for the music', as Henderson put it, and while demand from the London opera set hadn't been exceptional – even with an early finish allowing for prompt returns by rail – Christie ensured star quality in the shape of guests such as Austrian diplomat Baron Franckenstein, the Princess of Bismarck and society luminary/actress Lady Diana Cooper.

Figaro was a musical triumph, further haloed by Hamish Wilson's captivating sets. *The Times* reckoned the production gave 'the rare pleasure of a

'I am certain that Glyndebourne will become famous all over Europe'

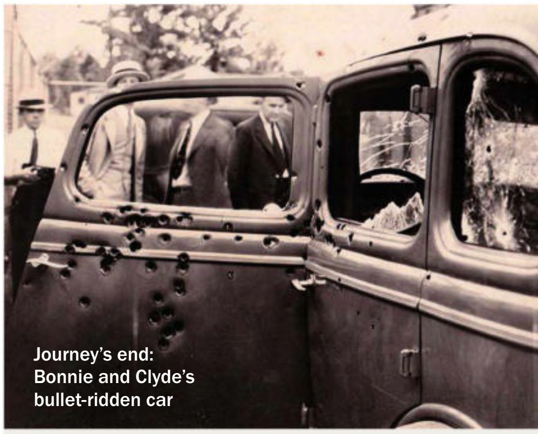
performance exquisite in every detail', while the *Illustrated London News* critic opined that 'if [Christie] keeps up to the standard set by his first production, I am certain that Glyndebourne will become famous all over Europe.'

The following night's *Così* was also a brilliant success. By the end of the season, houses were full and the seeds of Glyndebourne's reputation were sown. Roy Henderson returned each season up to the war. 'That was the happiest period of my career,' he recalled, 'by a long, long, long way.' ***Andrew Green***



The only way is Sussex: audience members admire the Glyndebourne grounds, 1934

INIS ASANO, JOHN DAVIS, SIMON PAULY, GETTY



Journey's end: Bonnie and Clyde's bullet-ridden car

Also in May 1934...

23rd: Gangsters **Bonnie Parker** and **Clyde Barrow** are shot dead when police open fire on their Ford V8 on the Louisiana State Highway 154. When the vehicle is searched, a large number of rifles, handguns and sawn-off shotguns are found, along with thousands of rounds of ammunition and 15 sets of license plates. Parker's family later refuse to allow the pair to be buried side by side.

25th: The BBC Symphony Orchestra and Wireless Singers give the first ever performance of **Bartók**'s *Cantata Profana*. The three-movement work, which also features tenor and bass soloists, sets texts which, discovered by the composer in Transylvania 20 years earlier, tell of nine sons who, while out hunting, find themselves turned into stags and have to beg their father not to shoot them.

25th: Gustav Holst dies of heart failure at the age of 59. The British composer's death follows a long period of ill health which has seen him significantly cut down on his activities, missing occasions such as the premiere of his opera *The Wandering Scholar* earlier in the year. He is buried in Chichester Cathedral close to Thomas Weelkes, his favourite Tudor composer.

27th: The opening round of matches in the second ever **Fifa World Cup** take place, with the host nation Italy defeating the US 7-1 in Rome. Sixteen teams in total are taking part, though they don't include Uruguay, the reigning champions, or England, who have again turned their nose up at the tournament, describing it as 'a joke'.

29th: Various Christian organisations meet in the German city of Wuppertal-Barmen to sign the **Barmen Declaration**, drawn up to oppose the German Christian movement, which stands accused of introducing Nazi ideology into protestant worship. The Declaration consists of six theses, one of which states that 'The message and order of the church should not be influenced by current political convictions'.

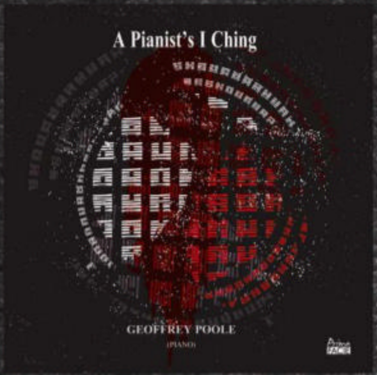
Prima FACIE

Prima Facie Records specialising in the promotion and preservation of music from the North West of England

New Releases:

PFCD202

PFCD233
Contemporary British Piano Music
Celebrating the lives of Anthony Gilbert, Peter Dickinson, Gordon Crosse and Giles Easterbrook

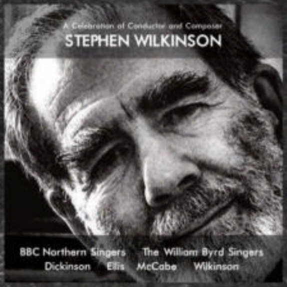


PFCD150

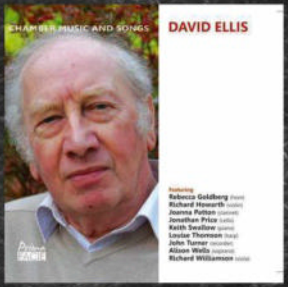
PFCD219

PFCD145

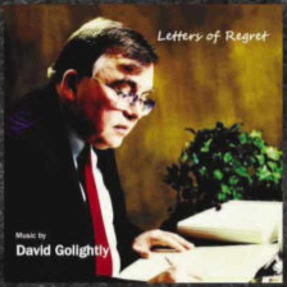
PFCD192



PFCD147

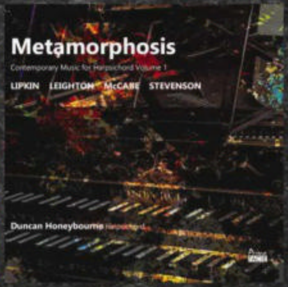


PFCD138



PFCD181

PFCD100



PFCD191

PFCD098

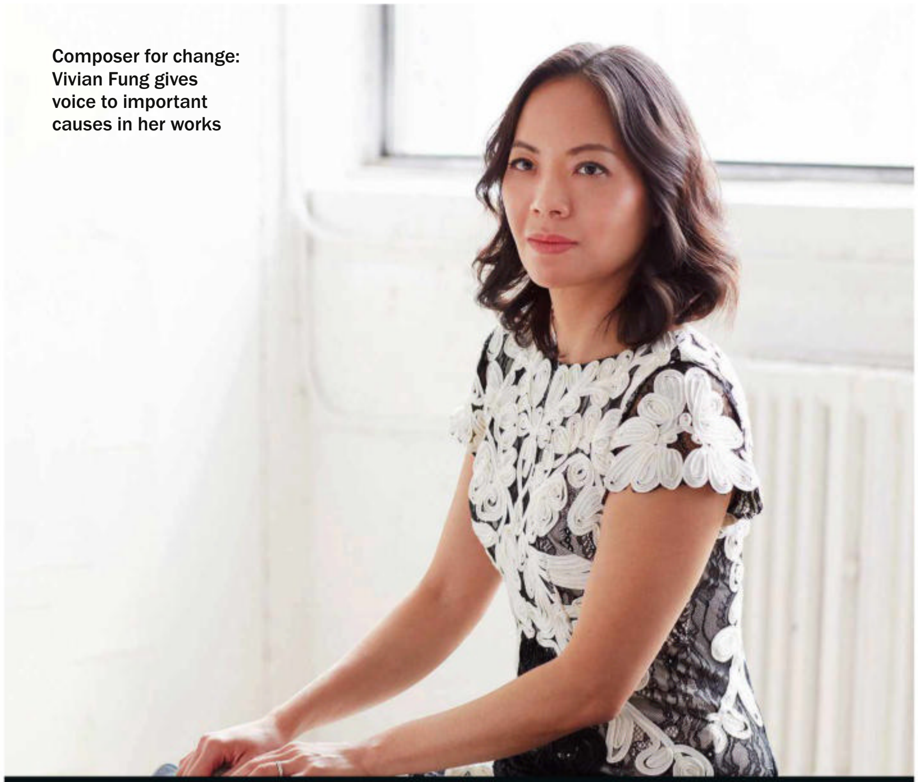
Other Releases:

PFCD060

PFCD224

primafacie.ascrecords.com

MEET THE COMPOSER



Composer for change: Vivian Fung gives voice to important causes in her works

GENEVIÈVE CARON

Vivian Fung

Juno Award-winning composer Vivian Fung has amassed a large and varied catalogue of orchestral, operatic, chamber and solo works on a variety of themes, often giving voice to under-represented people and places. The premiere of the Canadian's *Songs for the Next Generation* takes place at New York City's Kaufman Music Center on 30 May.

I was born and raised in Edmonton, Canada. I'm first-generation Canadian – my parents emigrated from Hong Kong after they got married. I grew up as any good immigrant family would, with eager parents who wanted their child to do well. I started piano lessons but didn't want to practise, so I made stuff up.

My first piano teacher was also a composer. She recognised what I was doing and instead of telling me to stop and focus on the lesson, she taught me how to notate it all. Winters are harsh in Edmonton and there was nothing to do, so that became my outlet and it blossomed.

***Songs for the Next Generation* is a collaboration with tenor Nicholas Phan, the Jasper Quartet and pianist Myra Huang.** I had the initial seed of the project with the poet Claire Wahmanholm; she writes very well about the effects of climate change on her personal journey as a mother and as a person. There's one particular poem called *O* that really struck all of us, so that is the centre of the piece.

The Kaufman Music Center works with a school called The Special High School. Claire and I have been working with the students there; they will be crafting new poetry and I've selected poems to set into the song cycle.

I am planning an opera with librettist Royce Vavrek. It's about my cousins, grandmother, uncles and aunts growing up in Vietnam and Cambodia, and eventually escaping the Cambodian genocide by migrating to Europe or Canada. We already have some scenes that we've collaborated on with Edmonton Opera, and we're going to workshop them in 2025 with the Community Opera Company.

I write every day and I think of my creativity as a well that I draw from. I write and the process takes over, so I don't really worry about writer's block; I give myself the licence of knowing the first draft is going to be trash! Having a good foundation helps, plus a good space to work in and the fact I do it every day – it's like a muscle and I've trained my muscle to work well. It took me a while to get to this point.

A good day of composing is about five hours. I will store ideas at random times, and there are some days when I just can't get any work done. You have to be flexible; it's not a 9-5 thing.

I often return to strings. I took up the cello as a teenager for a few years and I didn't practise a lot. My cello teacher recognised that it was futile to enforce anything, so he played me wonderful recordings of Paul Tortelier and Pablo Casals. That got me to really love the string repertoire, and from that day forward it was a very comforting aspect of writing. I just recently wrote a fifth string quartet.

Winning the Juno Award for my First Violin Concerto brought me exposure and recognition in Canada and the US. It was written for Kristin Lee, who had taken the music theory class I'd been teaching at Juilliard. We lost touch when she graduated and then we ran into each other one day and she invited me to one of her recitals. I was blown away by her playing and we started talking about me writing a piece for her.

It's really special to have collaborative efforts where it's not just about the notes on the page, but something bigger. I seek that as much as possible and it's great when it happens. Kristin and I are planning a piece for violin and percussion orchestra, and I'm working more with Royce Vavrek. There are a lot of stories to tell.

Three works to discover

Violin Concerto No. 1 *(2011)*
Written for violinist Kristin Lee, Fung's award-winning First Violin Concerto was inspired by her time performing in a New York gamelan ensemble and its visit to the Bali Arts Festival.

Yunnan Folk Songs *(2011)*
A fascinating set of seven songs based on field recordings made by Professor Zhang Xingrong in the Yunnan province of China, where some 25 recognised ethinc 'nationalities' reside.

The Ice is Talking *(2018)*
This unusal work for solo percussionist, playing three blocks of ice, was inspired by Fung's emotional reaction in seeing the dramatic change in the glaciers of the Canadian Rockies.

Music to my ears

Passage to India: sitarist Anoushka Shankar

The *BBC Music Magazine* team's current favourites...

Charlotte Smith *Editor*
In March, Bang & Olufsen hosted a celebration in Mayfair of the 2024 BBC Music Magazine Awards nominees. Performing at the event was last year's Premiere Award winner **Fenella Humphreys**, who charmed the audience with solo violin works by Bach, Debussy, Peter Maxwell Davies and, to finish, a dazzling account of Seonaid Aitken's *The Mad Piper* – a wistfully beautiful Scottish tune that becomes a whirling, fizzing reel. The gathering's spontaneous cheer following the final flourish said it all.

Jeremy Pound *Deputy editor*
Good things came to those who wait at this year's Royal Philharmonic Society Awards in Manchester. A speech of Mahlerian length from the BBC Singers – six movements plus coda – was followed by **Jasdeep Singh Degun**'s closing performance of his *Veer* for sitar, tabla and strings. The haunting, lyrical beauty of this fusion of Indian and western classical styles had us all mesmerised, and I've since been reliving the magic via his album, *Anomaly*.

Steve Wright *Acting reviews editor*
I have a penchant for tangy, vigorous early-20th-century orchestral music, and recently the works of **Bloch** have been hitting that sweet spot. There's a wonderful album on CPO featuring Bloch's two Concerti Grossi and the Concertino for Flute and Harp. The former manage a thrilling balance of neo-Classical rigour and Romantic lyricism, while the Concertino makes full use of the flute's otherworldly sonorities.

Freya Parr *Content producer*
While Jeremy (above) has been singing the praises of one sitarist, I've been turning to another: the brilliant **Anoushka Shankar**, who has been drip-feeding us a couple of new tracks from the forthcoming second album in her mini-LP trilogy. 'New Dawn' has provided the perfect backdrop to mornings with coffee and a book. To call it 'ambient music' is underselling it: jangly sitar floats among ethereal electronic textures.

REWIND

Great artists talk about their past recordings

This month: KARINE DESHAYES *Soprano*

MY FINEST MOMENT
Mozart *Exsultate, jubilate*
Karine Deshayes (soprano); Les Paladins/ Jérôme Corréas
Aparté AP327 (2023)

I have done so many recordings now, from Baroque to contemporary – I don't know exactly how many but it's over 50 which is amazing – and this is my first Mozart recording so it's really important for me. I have performed his music many times on stage since 1999 – I began with Cherubino and Zerlina, and now I can sing Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, and even Contessa in *Le nozze di Figaro*, so I'm happy to be able to record Mozart. I love the *Exsultate, jubilate* and I listened to it so many times when I was young, especially Kiri Te Kanawa's version.

I've known Jérôme Corréas for a long time and we even sang together when he was a singer, so it's a good connection and really important for me, because we can speak in the same terms. We performed this in concert and afterwards we decided to record it.

It was the right time to do it; I couldn't have approached it earlier as my voice has developed, and recording a work like this, which has already been recorded many times, is a real challenge. You have to vocalise as you breathe, and you have to maintain concentration and energy because the last aria is a big vocalise on

A Mozart celebration: Karine Deshayes with Les Paladins and Jérôme Correas, with whom she recorded *Exsultate jubilate*

'Alleluia'. It was really exciting to sing that for this recording.

MY FONDEST MEMORY

Une amoureuse flamme

Karine Deshayes (soprano); Orchestre Victor Hugo/Jean-François Verdier

Klarthe KLA064 (2019)

This was an album of French arias with the Orchestre Victor Hugo and conductor Jean-François Verdier. It was my first album of French repertoire and so it was a really memorable experience.

I had listened to Régine Crespin's recordings of these arias many times; I thought they were so beautiful and maybe I should try and sing them. But it was difficult because Régine Crespin is a big, big singer!

I decided I would like to try and record some roles I had sung on stage and some new ones: for example, I had already sung Cendrillon and Charlotte, but the arias from *La reine de Saba* and *Sapho* by Gounod were new to me. One of my favourite pieces was Catherine of Aragon's wonderful aria from *Henry VIII* by Saint-Saëns; it's a beautiful piece. It was a big challenge, because my voice had finally changed – I began as a mezzo-soprano – and I thought maybe I could have a go at some real soprano roles.

Jean-François Verdier has so many talents – he was also the first clarinet at the Opéra de Paris! He's a beautiful musician and it was an incredible experience. We did the recording in three days and afterwards we did a concert on the last day; we had so much energy. We were really lucky to do that.

I'D LIKE ANOTHER GO AT...

Rossini *Arias etc*

Karine Deshayes (soprano); Les Forces Majeures/Raphaël Merlin

Aparté AP121 (2016)

I like my Rossini recording; it was with Raphaël Merlin, who is also the cellist of Quatuor Ébène; I like it when my musician friends are instrumentalists and conductors too! We wanted to show the many faces of Rossini, so I did roles like Rosina and Cenerentola (I think I've done both roles 100 times – thank you Rossini). We also did some songs, because Rossini wrote so many, even in French. So we chose two *mélodies*, 'Nizza' and 'L'âme délaissée' and another one in Spanish, 'Canzonetta spagnuola', which Raphaël arranged for orchestra.

Apart from Rosina and Cenerentola, I had already sung in *La donna del lago* on stage in Paris. Desdemona and Semiramide were new to me, though, as was the cantata *Giovanna d'Arco*.

I would like to do it again, because now I can sing not only *opera buffa* roles, but also *opera seria*. After this recording I sang, for example, Semiramide, Armida and Elisabetta. I like this repertoire and we could now choose so many different arias. We could keep some of the arias, of course, but I can sing far more now and I think it's really important repertoire for Rossini. Maybe it could be a double album now, or perhaps just 'Part Two'!

Karine Deshayes's new album inspired by the figure of Lucrezia will be out on Aparté in the Autumn

AYMERIC GIRAUDEL, LAURE BERNARD, SIMON FOWLER, GETTY

Reference point: Piotr Anderszewski inpsires Alexandre Tharaud

MyHero

Alexandre Tharaud admires the unswerving integrity and unique sound of fellow pianist *Piotr Anderszewski*

Singers are my most inspiring guides. They open the way for me; they are my true teachers. I also listen to many pianists, but I'm always on the lookout for the singer within them.

A pianist guides me through their unique sound and song. The sound comes first – the late Rudolf Serkin and Emil Gilels, or Zhu Xiao-Mei and Arcadi Volodos today, all have a very distinctive sound. Then comes the song, which is about what is being woven and told. Marcelle Meyer, Sergio Fiorentino and Martha Argerich are among those who inspire me here.

Piotr Anderszewski and I are the same age, and we play at opposite ends of the spectrum. At 20, Piotr already had his own sound: direct, unaffected, unsentimental. His is a sound that goes straight to the heart. An ideal sound for the music he was playing at the time: Bach, Beethoven, Webern.

Piotr once told me that in concert, he would place his hands on the keyboard without any preconceptions. This is how his playing speaks: by letting his hands do their own thing, alone, like automatic writing. Each of his albums is a lesson – his recordings of Bach, Schumann and Szymanowski are at the top of the list for me. His repertoire includes few composers, but it's a rich, extremely thoughtful one.

Piotr also inspires me because he has remained deaf to all the expectations, comments, pressures and desires within the small world of music. As a musician, he has remained uncompromising. In this age of Instagram, Piotr is a lesson in wisdom.

Alexandre Tharaud's new album Four Hands is out on Erato on 3 May.

THE LISTENING SERVICE

To the power of four

Elizabeth Maconchy's 13 string quartets are not only superbly constructed examples of the artform, but also convey multiple layers of meaning, says **Tom Service**

ILLUSTRATION: MARIA CORTE MAIDAGAN

Elizabeth Maconchy's 13 string quartets belong at the centre of our musical lives. They should be at the heart of every string quartet's repertoire, and at the core of concert hall promotion. They are musical experiences that we listeners need in our lives: these quartets have an expressive intensity and an unflinching musical integrity, and as such they are a unique revelation of what the string quartet can do.

Maconchy loved the string quartet as a medium because it represented a musical absolute, a way of composing in which there was nowhere to hide. Writing an essay on her 50-year relationship with writing quartets – from her first in 1933 to the 13th in 1984 – she asked the question: 'What is it that has given [the string quartet] its exalted reputation and mystique? Why have so many composers regarded it as the perfect medium of expression?' Her answer is a challenge: 'Everything shows up: thinness of material, weakness of form, indifferent string writing, poor workmanship in general.' They do in other composers' quartets, but not in hers! She goes on: 'The good things show up too – the strength of the ideas, masterly craftsmanship, resourceful string writing: think for a moment of Bartók's six quartets and above all Beethoven's 16, and marvel at what he did with four players.'

But think, above all, of what she achieves: another of Maconchy's quartet-writing manifestos says: 'It is in the nature of a quartet to be precise and economical – perfectly balanced. It follows that music written for it should be logical, arresting and clear-cut – there must be nothing superfluous.' And in every moment of her 13 pieces, you hear a thrilling realisation of those ideals in action.

Maconchy loved the quartet medium as there was nowhere to hide

That means these pieces aren't just challenging for the musicians, but for us listeners too. They're nearly all less than 15 minutes long, but they each pack in more variety and richness than some quartet composers do in a whole lifetime. Maconchy's music is made as an 'impassioned argument', as she says, between the four players, but they're also invitations to all of us to get involved in these passionate musical discussions, so that we become another participant in their meaning.

They are pieces whose expressive power is dazzlingly diverse – from biting rhythmic energy to coruscatingly dark lyricism – and they can veer breathtakingly between one emotional pole and another in just a few seconds. These quartets repay a lifetime of listening and performing. Yet they have had only one complete recording, from the Hanson, Bingham and Mistry quartets in 1989. For all the excitement of those performances, there should be more. The story of the string quartet in the 20th century is incomplete without Maconchy's 13 pieces: listen to them – and keep listening!

BBC RADIO 3 90–93FM

Tom Service is the presenter of *Saturday Morning* every weekend at 9am

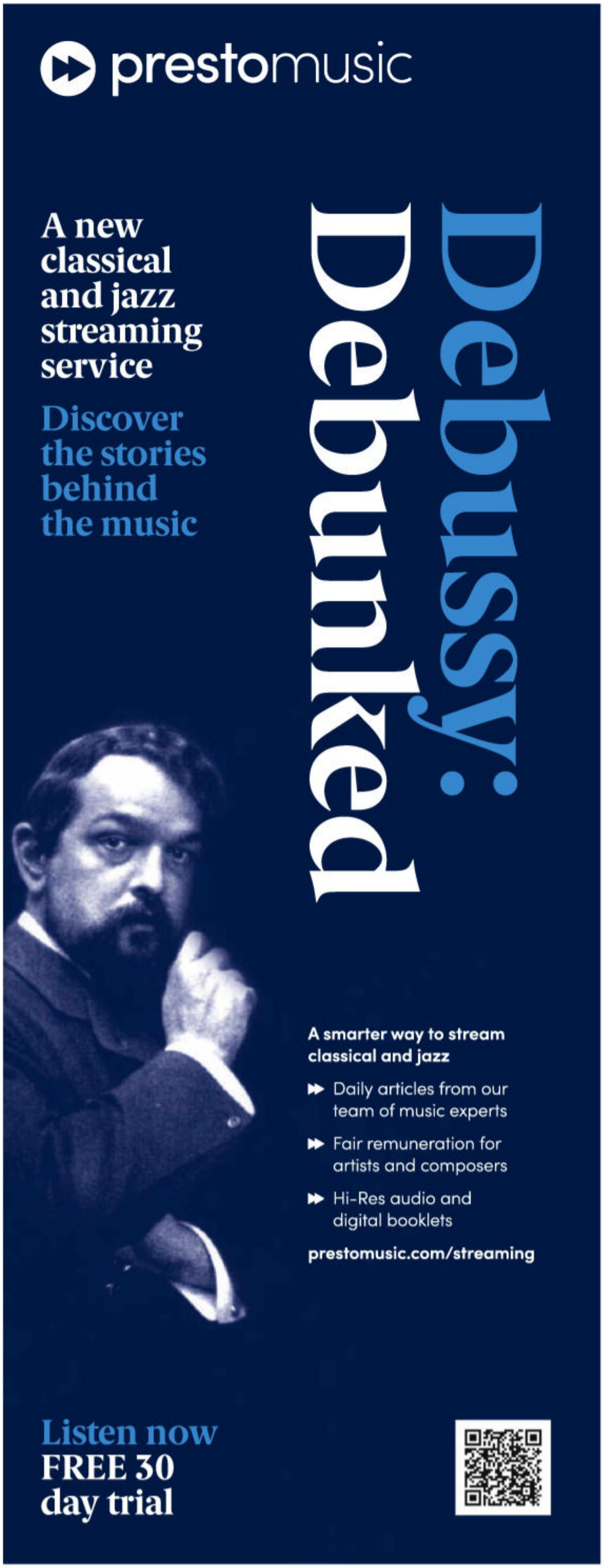
Grand master: Pollini performs at the Royal Festival Hall in 2016

Maurizio Pollini Born 1942 *Pianist and conductor*
'That young man can play the piano better than any of us,' enthused Arthur Rubinstein on hearing an 18-year-old Maurizio Pollini play his way to victory in the International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw in 1960. That victory set in motion a career that would last a full six decades, covering repertoire ranging from JS Bach to Webern, Boulez and Stockhausen, all played with a meticulous attention to detail and uncanny ability to bring out detail that might pass other pianists by. The Milan-born son of architect Gino Pollini, Maurizio briefly put his ambitions on hold for a period of intense practice before touring worldwide from the mid-1960s onwards. In 1971, he recorded Stravinsky's *Three Movements from Petrushka* and Prokofiev's Seventh Sonata for Deutsche Grammophon, beginning a relationship with the 'Yellow Label' that would produce a string of acclaimed discs. From 1976, he also took up the baton, though the piano would always remain his priority. His ardent championship of modern music was exemplified by his 'Progetto Pollini' series of recitals which, launched in 1995, combined classic and contemporary works.

Byron Janis Born 1928 *Pianist*
One of a flurry of supremely talented American pianists to hit their stride immediately after World War II, Byron Janis (pictured left) was arguably best known for his performances of Romantic repertoire ranging from Chopin to Rachmaninov, much of which he recorded for RCA in the 1950s. Talent-spotted by Vladimir Horowitz while in his teens, the Pennsylvania-born Janis studied with the Russian pianist for four years, leading up to his Carnegie Hall debut in 1948. Sadly, from the early 1970s, his career was bedevilled by arthritis in both hands, something he would later speak publicly about as an ambassador for the Arthritis Foundation.

Péter Eötvös Born 1944 *Composer and conductor*
Having first put pen to paper at the age of five, Péter Eötvös's wide-ranging output as a composer included 12 operas plus a wealth of orchestral, chamber and vocal works. Championed at an early age by his fellow Hungarian Ligeti, he would go on become musical director of Ensemble InterContemporain in Paris from 1978-91, helping to lead the way in the composition and performance of new music. As a conductor, he held the posts of principal guest conductor with both the BBC Symphony and Gothenburg Symphony orchestras, and it was with the latter that he won the BBC Music Magazine Award for Technical Excellence for his recording of Berio's Sinfonia in 2006.

GETTY



THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Pick a theme... and name your seven favourite examples

Conductor Gábor Takács-Nagy tells us the best pieces of musical medicine to soothe the soul

Hungarian Gábor Takács-Nagy came to fame as the leader of the Takács Quartet, with whom he played for 17 years. In 2002, he turned to conducting and is currently music director of the Manchester Camerata and principal guest conductor of the Budapest Festival Orchestra. On 17 May, he conducts the BFO in the penultimate concert of his 'Mozart, Made in Manchester' series at the Stoller Hall, with pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet.

MIGUEL BUENO, BEN EALOVEGA, GETTY

Mozart Ave Verum Corpus

Mozart wrote this motet just a few months before he died and, listening to it, I sense that he felt his time was running out. There is a transcendence to this music that is hard to find anywhere else. It has a connection to the world above – not in a religious sense exactly, but it is far removed from the problems of everyday life. Playing or conducting it is like taking a spiritual tonic: I come out of it feeling younger and calmer, wondering why I waste my time on doubts and fears.

Beethoven Symphony No. 9 – Adagio molto e cantabile

Beethoven once said that anyone who understood his music spiritually would be able to shed the problems of their life. That is certainly true of this piece. After hearing it, I no longer feel jealousy or anguish; I'm not afraid of death. And this is remarkable, coming, as it does, from a composer whose life was full of problems: hearing problems, the difficulty of always living life alone, of forever craving somebody's love. Beethoven found love in nature, God and humanity as a whole, and the slow movement of his Ninth Symphony makes that very clear.

Schubert String Quintet, D965 – Adagio

It's no wonder that the great pianist Arthur Rubinstein wanted to die while listening to this piece. I've just finished reading *War and Peace* and I believe Tolstoy and Schubert were expressing the same sentiments: honesty, warmth, spirituality, consolation, the depth and complexity of human experience. This was a composer who never had a real love, but in this movement, I think he found everything that he was looking for in life. If I could take one movement with me to a desert island, I would choose this.

Beethoven String Quartet Op. 135 – Lento assai

Op. 135 was Beethoven's very last string quartet. I played it many times with the Takács Quartet as an encore and I always got the sense that it helped the audience to understand the message of Beethoven: one of healing the soul with eternal calm and love. Sometimes I have brief moments – say 30 seconds – when I think, 'Wow, now I understand everything clearly', where I feel able to reconcile myself to the shortcomings in my life. This piece helps to bring me to that point.

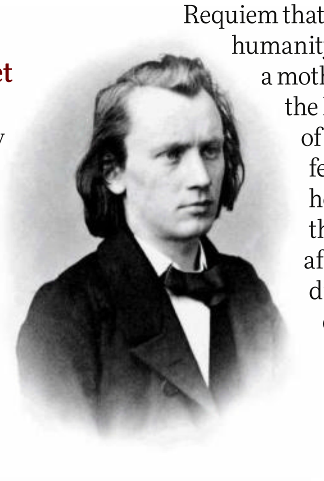
Mozart Piano Concerto No. 17 – Andante

This is a piece that is very close to me as I recorded it with my friend, the pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet. Mozart once wrote to his friend that the making of a genius is not talent or hard work, but love for others. And you can hear that so clearly in this piece. Listening to it is like going into a beautiful forest and suddenly stopping in a meadow and thinking, 'This is so simple, so natural. And how great it is to be alive just in order to be able to experience this.'

Haydn The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross – 'Today you will be with me in Paradise'

This moment in Haydn's *Seven Last Words*, where you suddenly arrive in C major, is the most representative portrayal of paradise that I've ever heard in music: free of all suffering and anguish. I am something between a believer and a non-believer. But once when I conducted this music with the Manchester Camerata, I had goose pimples and I thought, 'Now I believe in God'. Even now, I feel there must be some higher force out there. How else could Haydn dream up this magical music?

Brahms A German Requiem – Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit



This soprano solo is one of the shortest movements in Brahms's *German Requiem*, but I've never found a moment in any Requiem that more fully conveys a sense of humanity. It portrays the love between a mother and son. Brahms wrote the Requiem just after the death of his mother and I've always felt that this movement was a homage to her. I programmed this piece just a few months after my own mother had died and, for me too, it was an expression of my relationship with her. *Interview by Hannah Nepilova*

Spiritual healing: Gábor Takács-Nagy finds consolation in music; (opposite) pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet; (opposite below) Brahms around the time of his mother's death

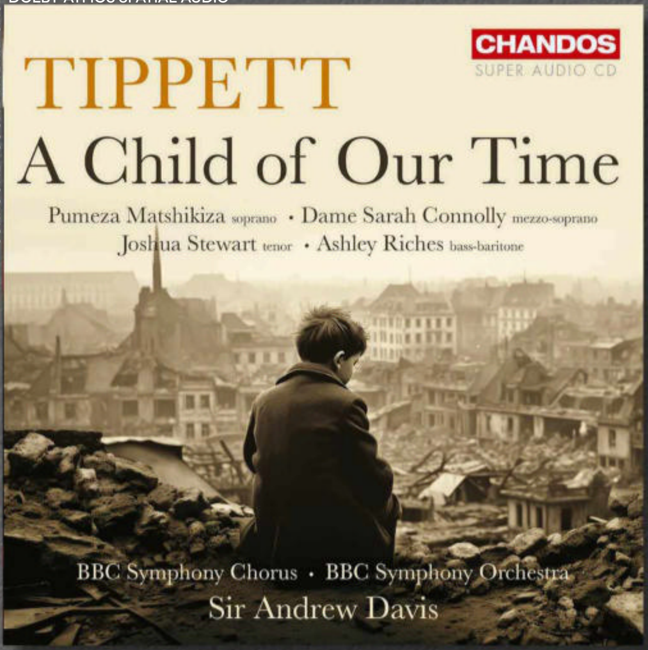
CHANDOS

THE SOUND OF CLASSICAL

MAY RELEASES

DOLBY ATMOS SPATIAL AUDIO

SURROUND-SOUND HYBRID SACD



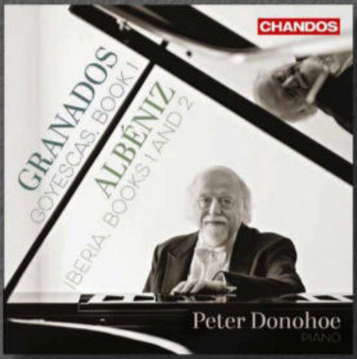
CHAN 20279

HAYDN

PIANO TRIOS, VOL. 3

Trio Gaspard

Trio Gaspard's revelatory series of Haydn's piano trios continues. *Gramophone* described Vol. 1 as 'an album of joyous, imaginative music-making that whets the appetite for future instalments'. The première recording of Kit Armstrong's *Revêtements* completes the album.



CHAN 20293

PETER DONOHOE PLAYS GRANADOS AND ALBÉNIZ

The British virtuoso Peter Donohoe performs two great monuments of Spanish piano music: Book I of Granados's *Goyescas* and Books I and II of Albéniz's *Iberia*. His extraordinary facility and innate musicianship produce dazzling and breathtaking readings of these twin peaks of the repertoire.

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

TIPPETT

A Child of Our Time

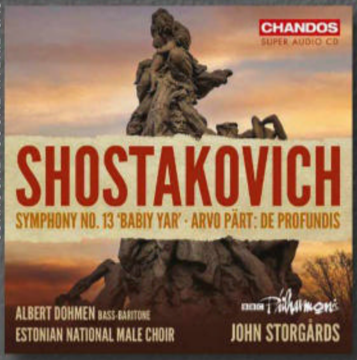
BBC Symphony Chorus
BBC Symphony Orchestra
Sir Andrew Davis

Sir Andrew Davis leads the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in this powerful new recording of Tippett's pacifist oratorio, with soloists Pumeza Matshikiza, Dame Sarah Connolly, Joshua Stewart, and Ashley Riches.

CHSA 5341

DOLBY ATMOS SPATIAL AUDIO

SURROUND-SOUND HYBRID SACD



CHSA 5335

SHOSTAKOVICH

SYMPHONY NO. 13; PÄRT: DE PROFUNDIS

Albert Dohmen
Estonian National Male Choir
BBC Philharmonic | John Storgårds

John Storgårds's acclaimed series of Shostakovich symphonies continues with this recording of Symphony No. 13 Babiy Yar. The BBC Philharmonic is joined by the bass-baritone Albert Dohmen and the Estonian National Male Choir, who also feature in the orchestral version of Arvo Pärt's De profundis.

CHAN 20297

BRAHMS & CONTEMPORARIES, VOL. 1

Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective

The Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective's new series juxtaposes piano quartets by Brahms with ones by his lesser-known contemporaries. Here the group couples Brahms's epic A major Quartet with the Piano Quartet of Luise Adolpha Le Beau, a student of Clara Schumann, Lachner, and Rheinberger. Her extensive output covers all genres: the Piano Quartet was composed around 1884 and performed in the Leipzig Gewandhaus that year to great critical acclaim.

WWW.CHANDOS.NET
[MP3 * LOSSLESS * STUDIO * SURROUND]
[SACD * CD * USB]

Spotify · Listen on Apple Music · prestomusic · EUROPADISC CLASSICAL

STAY IN THE KNOW

Chandos Records, Chandos House, 1 Commerce Park, Commerce Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX. Tel: 01206 225200

Richard Morrison

Why some composers happen to be the best writers about music too

When people want to mock my inky profession, they usually wheel out that old insult: 'Nobody ever erected a statue to a critic.' To which I always reply: 'Oh, but they did!' Go to Zwickau in Germany and you will find a fine statue of Robert Schumann, just outside his birthplace. Does it show him playing the piano or writing one of his symphonies? No, he's sitting on a chair, chin resting on hand, head tilted quizzically – as if listening intently to something.

In short, he's caught in the horrible act of being a music critic, which he was early in his career. Indeed, he was a very perceptive one. In his first published review, for instance, he concocted one of the most memorable sentences written about any composer. It was his generous acclamation of a new kid on the block named Frédéric Chopin: 'Hats off, gentlemen, a genius.'

In fact, many composers through the ages have written entertainingly about music and their fellow musicians. And since this is the 400th issue of *BBC Music Magazine* – a journal devoted to capturing in words the wonder of classical music – I thought it would be apt to list my three favourite examples of composers who proved to be as gifted with words as with crotchets and quavers.

The first of them is Hector Berlioz. I devoured his *Memoirs*, in David Cairns's superbly crafted English translation, when I was a student and growing increasingly sceptical and depressed about a musical world dominated (as it was back in the 1970s) by severe, cerebral figures – Pierre Boulez and his disciples, basically – who were writing music that seemed impenetrable and emotionless.

Reading Berlioz reminded me that music should and could again be fun. His prose was also side-splittingly funny, especially when about himself. In 1827 he became besotted with an Irish actress, Harriet Smithson, and his account of how he chased her round Europe while bombarding her with letters, all unanswered, is wonderfully self-debunking. Being very melodramatic, he acquired some poison with which to kill himself if she rejected him. But being also very pragmatic, he packed a stomach pump

Berlioz's side-splittingly funny prose reminded me that music should and could be fun again

in case he changed his mind after taking the poison. It's a great story, but also very revealing of his creative process, because out of all this lovesick agitation (and, it must be said, a fair amount of opium) emerged his *Symphonie fantastique*.

Just as funny, but in a much more laidback way, is Philip Glass's memoir, *Words Without Music*. I love it for the hope it offers to every struggling young musician, because Glass – who must now be one of the world's wealthiest classical composers – admits in the book that he wasn't able to earn a living from music until he was 41. What's more, he recounts in hilarious detail all the jobs he was forced to do instead. They included steelworker, warehouse packer, truck loader, plumber, furniture shifter and New York taxi driver.

He also supplies one of the best descriptions of what it was like to be taught by Nadia Boulanger, the terrifying mentor to three generations of European and American composers. At his first lesson with her she silently read through the compositions he had brought in. 'Finally,' Glass writes, 'she paused and, stabbing one bar of music with her long-pointed figure, proclaimed triumphantly: "Ah, this was written by a real composer!" That was the last compliment I heard from her for the next two years.'

And my third choice? A bit of a cheat, some may say, because the veracity of Dmitri Shostakovich's memoir *Testimony* ('as told to' the Russian journalist Solomon Volkov) has been challenged many times. How much of it is Shostakovich's actual words? That's a secret, one imagines, that Volkov (80 this year) will carry to the grave. However, over the years I have been lucky enough to talk to great musicians who knew Shostakovich well – Mstislav Rostropovich, Galina Vishnevskaya and Gidon Kremer among them – and they all said that, for them, the book truly reflected Shostakovich's thoughts, personality and way of speaking.

So, I still dip into it frequently, mainly because it reminds me that (to misquote the great Liverpool football manager Bill Shankly) music isn't a matter of life and death – it's more important than that. Faced with unspeakable oppression, people have always summoned up the courage and creative impulse to sing, play instruments and compose. We should be humbled by their example, and inspired.

Richard Morrison is chief music critic and a columnist of The Times

Living on the edge: Errollyn Wallen at her lighthouse home on the northern Scottish coast

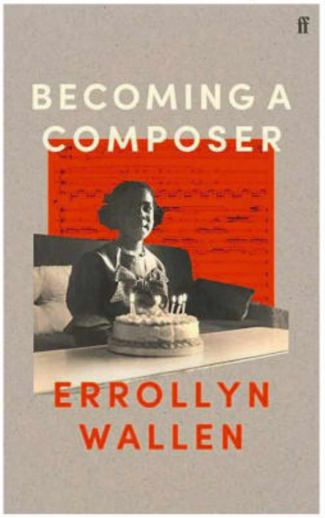
Northern light

From her first piano lesson, composer Errollyn Wallen has lived and breathed music; and though inspired by a range of styles, her composing is a deeply personal expression, as she tells Kate Wakeling

PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN MILLAR

'It can be very irritating, being a composer,' laughs Errollyn Wallen. 'You're always trying to solve these ridiculous problems that you've set yourself. And sometimes you just want a day off, but the music won't let you.' Be it going for a walk or doing the washing up, Wallen somehow always finds herself lost in composition: 'I'm obsessed by music. I can't help it. So, I'll try doing something else but I find I'm still thinking about whatever it is I'm working on. I'm an untidy person so at least washing up fulfils two functions: I feel good that I'm actually tidying something, and I'm also thinking.'

Wallen's obsession with music is borne out in her extraordinary catalogue of works and accolades. Her music is beautiful, communicative and instinctive, yet always underpinned by a sense of profound technical mastery. A recipient



Making waves: (top left) Wallen's *Principia* is performed at the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Paralympics; (above) her memoir; (this picture) enjoying the solitude of home

of an Ivor Novello Award for her body of work, Wallen has written some 22 operas alongside a dizzying array of orchestral, chamber and vocal works. Her music was commissioned for the opening ceremony of the 2012 Paralympic Games and the Queen's Golden and Diamond Jubilees, while her bold re-imagining of *Jerusalem* took the BBC Last Night of the Proms by storm in 2020. As evidenced by her remarkable output, for Wallen composing is 'as natural as breathing'.

In person, she is terrifically warm and open, overflowing with words and ideas – she laughs at how 'I never finish my sentences; you might have noticed'. Last year she had to finish a great deal of sentences, completing a memoir, *Becoming a Composer,* where she reflects on her musical journey, gives insight into her creative process and discusses (with satisfying candour) the hustle and grind of composing for a living. It is a generous, beautiful and witty book, and does an excellent job of demystifying the life of the composer, not least through its discussion of Wallen's compositional approaches without recourse to any sort of musical jargon: 'I wanted to find a way of talking about composing that wouldn't exclude people… that would encourage anyone from anywhere to make music.'

As she shares in *Becoming a Composer,* Wallen's upbringing was complicated. Born in Belize, she moved as a child to London and was brought up by an uncle and aunt in Tottenham while her parents lived in New York. Her experiences growing up were painful and isolating: 'surviving childhood' was, she states, an achievement in itself. Despite a sense of rejection and isolation, music was a powerful tonic: 'The moment I began learning the piano, that was it. I loved everything about it. I didn't suppose I was especially gifted, but I must have been very good at sight-reading because I'd go galloping through music. The piano was my window into the wide world of music. Stravinsky talked about how the piano is "the fulcrum" of his ideas and I know what he means; there's a certain sort of thinking you do at the piano when composing, where everything becomes very clear. Even the way you sit at the piano – it's like this

'My book aims to encourage anyone from anywhere to make music'

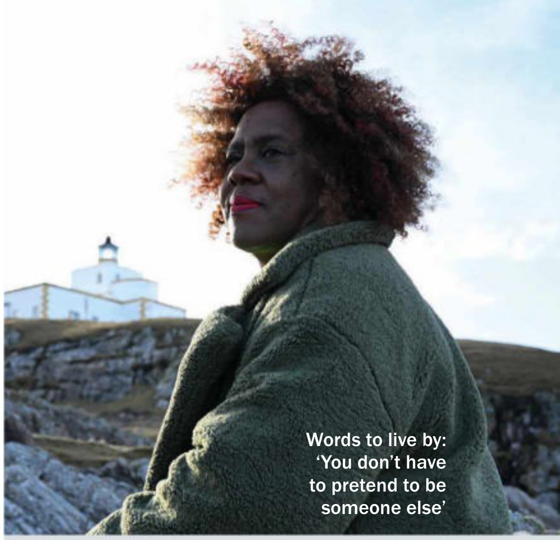
marvellous table! – but at the same time, you're transported to other places.'

Despite her love of the piano, Wallen first wanted to be a dancer. 'I don't think I was especially good at dance, but I had this incredible yearning to do it – certainly for ballet. I didn't care about being the best. I just wanted to be on stage with the music.' She went on to study at the Dance Theatre of Harlem before embarking on a degree in dance and music at Goldsmiths. It was only then that she realised 'music was the thing. One day I noticed what I was actually doing. There I was, sat at the piano again, where I could be for up to 10 hours, and I thought: "You have to pay attention to what you're really doing."'

Music has remained 'the thing' and across her glittering career, Wallen has carved out a powerful and original musical voice that draws variously on serialism, the avant-garde, blues, gospel, jazz, minimalism and much more besides. In *Becoming a Composer,* she describes her music as resisting 'being part of any sort of -ism (or indeed -wasm)'. For Wallen, 'With the vast history behind us and the various cultures and ideas swirling around us, it is more productive to stay alert, ever questioning the techniques we use in our work.' This was not an easy path to follow, and the start of her career was chequered with rejection. But she was resolute: 'I was never going to stop composing the music I had been waiting to hear.'

Wallen's music often deals with powerfully political themes. *Mighty River* was commissioned to mark the 200th anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act while her opera *YES*, created in collaboration with Bonnie Greer, explores Greer's appearance on BBC *Question Time* in 2009 alongside the then-leader

JOHN MILLAR, GETTY



of the BNP, Nick Griffin. 'I remember a critic at the time was furious, and said the subject of immigration had already been "done" in opera countless times. And that response was very interesting to me. As if it's been "done". As if.'

While social justice is an important theme in Wallen's works, 'they're also just stories I want to tell – often exploring aspects of life that I think aren't spoken about enough. For me, everything starts from the point of view of the personal, from me imagining somebody and thinking, "What is it about this person that we can't see? What's happening behind the scenes?" There are so many stories that still need to be told. And I think we're living in a climate now where people do at last have the ears to listen.' That's not to say it's easy, though. She notes, 'As a Black person I seem to have to do more thinking – personally, culturally and historically – than my white counterparts, often having to think for them or imagine their viewpoint without reciprocity.' There is still much that needs to change.

Indeed, Wallen remains restless to 'fling open the doors' for composers entering the profession from less conventional musical backgrounds: 'It strikes me that in classical music, particularly over the last 50 years, there's been a stranglehold of the idea that you have to work in this way, or write in that style. And it doesn't make sense. For me, the most important thing a composer can do is give themselves permission to be who they are, and to write music from their own storehouse – their own treasure trove – of their background. I have many students from non-Western classical backgrounds and I always say, "Use that in your work. You don't have to put on this coat and pretend to be somebody else."'

This is something Wallen learned first hand. 'I remember, when I started out, a friend clearly didn't feel I looked

Compositions of purpose

Five vital works by Errollyn Wallen

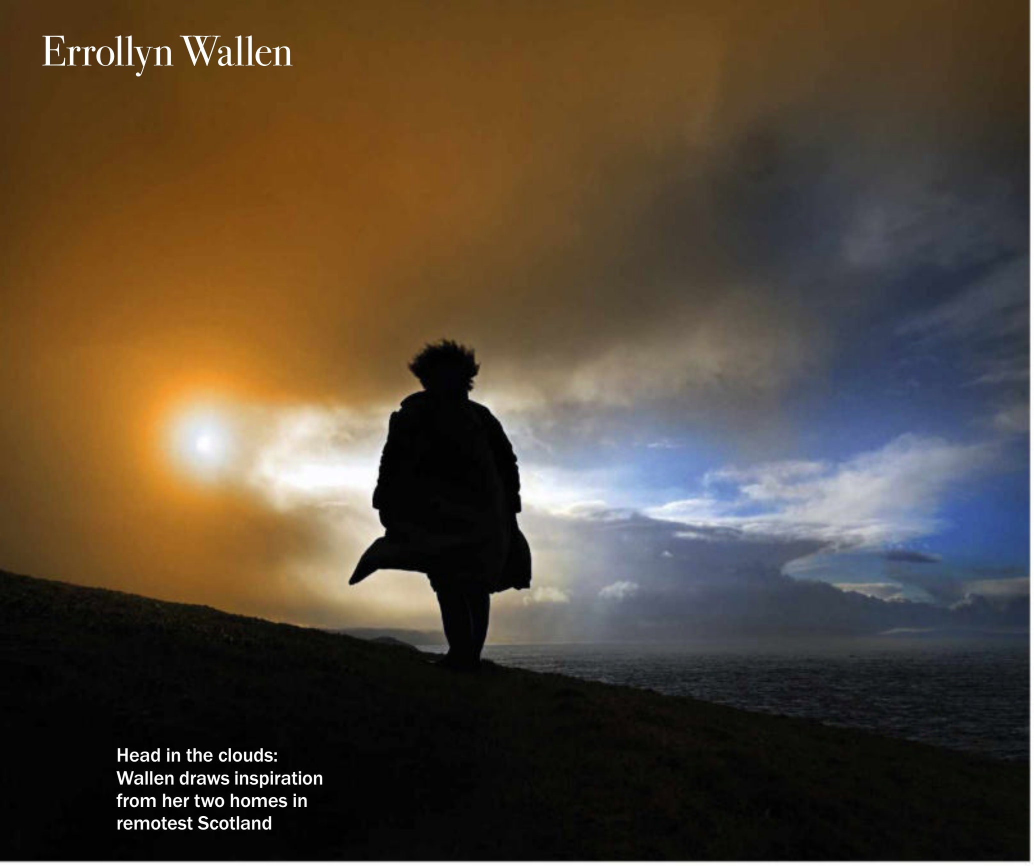
Mighty River
Mighty River was composed to mark the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. Wallen's evocative orchestral score blends contemporary classical idioms with several spirituals. As she describes, 'It is an innate human instinct to be free, just as it is a law of nature that the river should rush headlong to the sea. That is the concept behind *Mighty River*, which is composed in a single movement.'

Peace on Earth
This delicate carol explores the bleakness of winter and the power of hope. The piece continues to be widely performed and was included in last year's Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols from the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge. Wallen is still bemused at the global success of 'that little song I wrote, almost on the spot'.

Concerto Grosso
This is a wonderfully zingy celebration of the Baroque concerto style, brought bang up to date by Wallen's skillful interweaving of jazz and modernist harmonies.

Silent Twins
This haunting opera explores the story of identical twins whose obsessive relationship eventually sees them descend into crime. By turns heartbreaking and darkly witty, Wallen's complex score captures the mysteries of their communication and showcases her flair for dramatic tension.

Jerusalem
Commissioned for the BBC's Last Night of the Proms in 2020, Wallen's reimagining of *Jerusalem* left traditionalists up in arms – but this was the point. Fizzing with dissonance, the arrangement was a challenge to the establishment and offers a tribute to the Windrush generation.



Head in the clouds: Wallen draws inspiration from her two homes in remotest Scotland

"authentic" enough as a composer, and she said, "You're going to have to start wearing glasses so that people will take you more seriously." But I've always loved wearing clothes that are flamboyant. And when people have said, "Oh, but you don't look like a composer!" I now realise that's their problem. It's not mine.' Indeed, Wallen has made something of a stir with her glorious outfits over the years. Yet despite claiming to have 'a very vain side', she struggles with having to present herself onstage at the close of a premiere and describes herself as a 'recovering shy and lumpy introvert'. On the theme of 'bowing clothes', as Wallen wryly terms them, she recalls the premiere of her oratorio *Carbon 12* about coal mining in South Wales. Wallen couldn't resist the allure of a pair of 'towering' Terry de Havilland leather and metal wedges: 'I was obsessed with these shoes, but I couldn't walk in them. So, I thought, "If I put them in a plastic carrier bag and take them to the side of the stage, I can totter on with them, do the bow, then change back into sensible shoes offstage."'

And the bow itself: does Wallen now enjoy this? 'I hate it. As a performer I found it easier to take a bow. But when you're sitting in the audience, hearing a piece you wrote, you feel embarrassed, exposed. And then I think, "Why do I need to go up on stage? It's about the performers." But you have to do it. I always worry I'll fall over.'

JOHN MILLAR

'I fought it for many years, but to be a composer you have to be alone'

One bow Wallen wasn't dreading when we spoke was for her new Violin Concerto, written for Philippe Quint and the Calgary Philharmonic. 'That bow will feel different somehow. I can't wait to take that bow because I want to say thank you to Philippe. I don't take lightly the privilege of working with great musicians who have had a lifetime's study and devotion to their instrument. It's a two-way thing: a musician might come to me for a piece, but I have to find something that brings out their personality, and really showcases their specific talent.' For this new Violin Concerto, Wallen asked Quint 'if there was anything in his childhood that he wanted to share with me, and he told me about a lullaby his grandfather used to sing to him. So, I've had great delight in putting that in the second movement. I'm so happy about this, because the Concerto will always be for Philippe.'

Other projects brewing include a viola quintet for the Solem Quartet, a

new song for Kiri Te Kanawa's birthday celebrations and a new work for the Academy of St Martin in the Fields as part of their 'Marriner 100' festivities to mark the centenary of their founder Neville Marriner. Wallen also talks about her plans to return to performance in the near future. 'To be a composer you've got to really understand the performative aspect of music. You need empathy with the performer and perhaps even to know what it is to be a performer.' She is especially excited about the possibility of a collaboration with soprano Ruby Hughes ('We want to come up with something unusual!'), whose new album with Manchester Collective, *End of My Days*, takes its name from a song featured in Wallen's 2014 song cycle *Are You Worried About the Rising Cost of Funerals?*

While Wallen relishes such collaboration, she observes that, 'To be a composer you do have to be absolutely alone.' She spends much of her time in solitude in her two homes in Scotland: a lighthouse in Strathy, and a house by the sea in Orkney. 'Silence is a thing you can run away from,' Wallen notes, 'but as a composer, I can't see a way around it. I fought it for so many years because it's sometimes so boring! And it can be lonely. But you must have some solitude every day.' She tempers this ascetic way of life with other pleasures. She is, it transpires, a great fan of 'cake for breakfast', and cheerfully relays that, 'Last week I bought 24 pastries, which are in the freezer. I don't know if they'll last the week.'

Confectionery aside, it is clear Wallen remains in the service of her art: 'You have to manage how you live your life to accommodate the demands of the music. There's nothing else for it. There's a moment when a work takes hold of you, and you have to be ready.'

PENTATONE

Schubert: Ländler

Star pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard presents *Ländler*, a collection of delightful dances composed by Franz Schubert. Rustic and cheerful, these miniatures display a fascinating side of Schubert's musical persona.

Their simplicity is deceptive, as these dances are frequently shaken up by Schubert's harmonic wandering soul, yet remaining lyrical, picturesque and tuneful.

PTC 5187 034

COMING THIS SPRING

PTC 5187 205

PTC 5187 227

PTC 5187 202

iTunes · MUSIC · qobuz · amazon · Europadisc · TIDAL · prestomusic · DEEZER · Spotify

www.pentatonemusic.com

Distributed in the UK by RSK

> I've learnt to be more relaxed, and I can allow the musicians to do what they need to do, rather than forcing it out of them

THE BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

Mark Elder

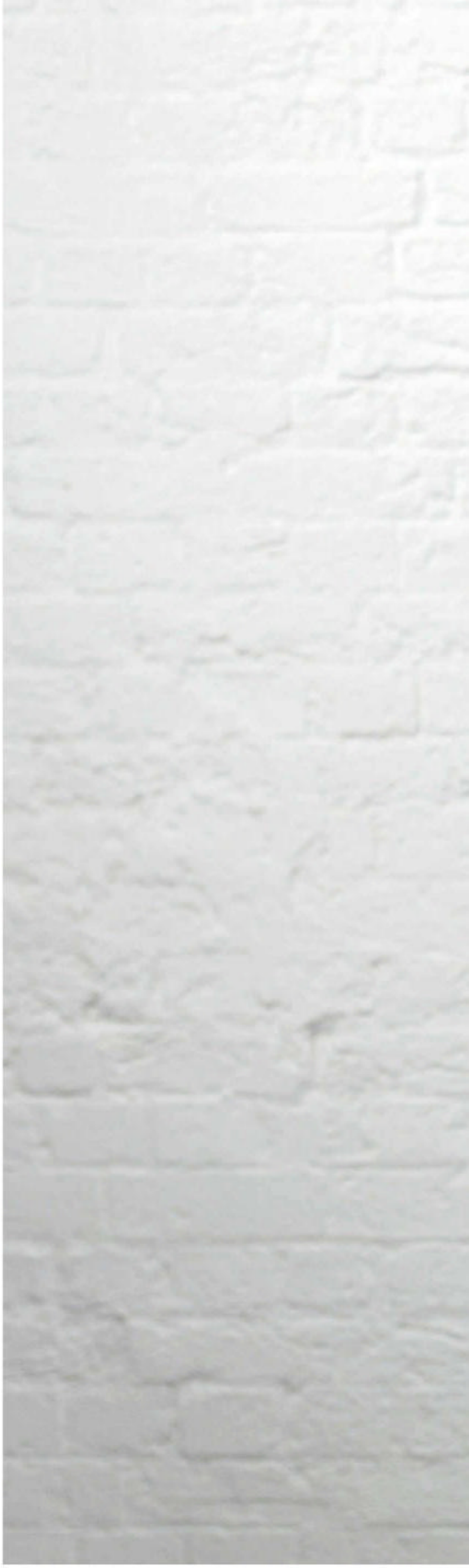
As he nears the end of his quarter-century tenure with the Hallé, the veteran conductor tells **Tom Service** there's still so much more to learn and explore in the music he loves

PHOTOGRAPHY: BENJAMIN EALOVEGA

It's the end of an era in Manchester. And at the centre of their last season together – the 24th year of one of the most successful and long-running partnerships in British orchestral history – conductor Sir Mark Elder and the Hallé are playing one of the monuments of the repertoire: Bruckner's Eighth Symphony. It's a symphonic cosmos that's a revelation of the emotional and expressive depths that they can reach together, and which displays every aspect of the Hallé's collective and individual virtuosity. The orchestra distinctively combines long, singing lines – the slow movement unfurls as a superhuman stretching of time and feeling, in which the strings' bows realise Bruckner's infinitely long phrases with breathtaking conviction – with an absolute clarity of articulation, as the brass players sound clarion calls of apocalyptic conclusion in the symphony's coda.

And yet everything isn't as it seems. This concert isn't the rolling out of a symphonic party-piece in this celebratory season, but a journey into the unknown. Amazingly, this is the first time that Elder, at the age of 76, has ever conducted Bruckner's Eighth.

We meet the morning after the symphonic apocalypse. 'I was apprehensive, he says. 'I'd never stood in front of this noise and I didn't know how it was going to feel. You can't know in advance what it's going to feel like until you go through a performance.' Elder has only previously conducted a single Bruckner symphony with the Hallé – the Seventh, at St Paul's in London in 2005 – and when I ask if the Eighth was a lifetime ambition for him, it's clear it wasn't. He wasn't even sure that he liked it. 'In order to find out whether you love it or not, you need to have the time to prepare it. During the pandemic I started to listen and learn more about Bruckner. I had loved the Seventh at St Paul's, and the birth of that performance happened when I was studying it in



English appeal: Delius (left), whose *Mass of Life* Elder introduced to the initially unwilling players of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in Norway

Norwegians wooed

Elder and the Bergen Phil

He's not only in Manchester: Mark Elder is principal guest conductor of Norway's Bergen Philharmonic too. He began his Hallé season with Mahler's Ninth, and repeated it in Bergen earlier this year, proving the strength of the Norwegian connection. 'Having got to know each other steadily, we're now going hammer and tongs,' he says, with performances planned especially over the coming seasons, as Bergen finds a new principal conductor when Edward Gardner leaves the job later this year.

The fruits of the Bergen partnership are already staggering to hear in a record that's another highlight of Elder's British music discography: Delius's *A Mass of Life*, released at the end of last year. 'What was so brilliant and memorable for me was that at the start, both the chorus and orchestra were saying, "What is this? What's he making us do? It's horrible. We'll never get it right!" But gradually they got the idiom, and it started to sound as I dreamt it might. It's the harmony that's so difficult – the way it shifts and changes – but when it's in tune and balanced, it's a special experience.'

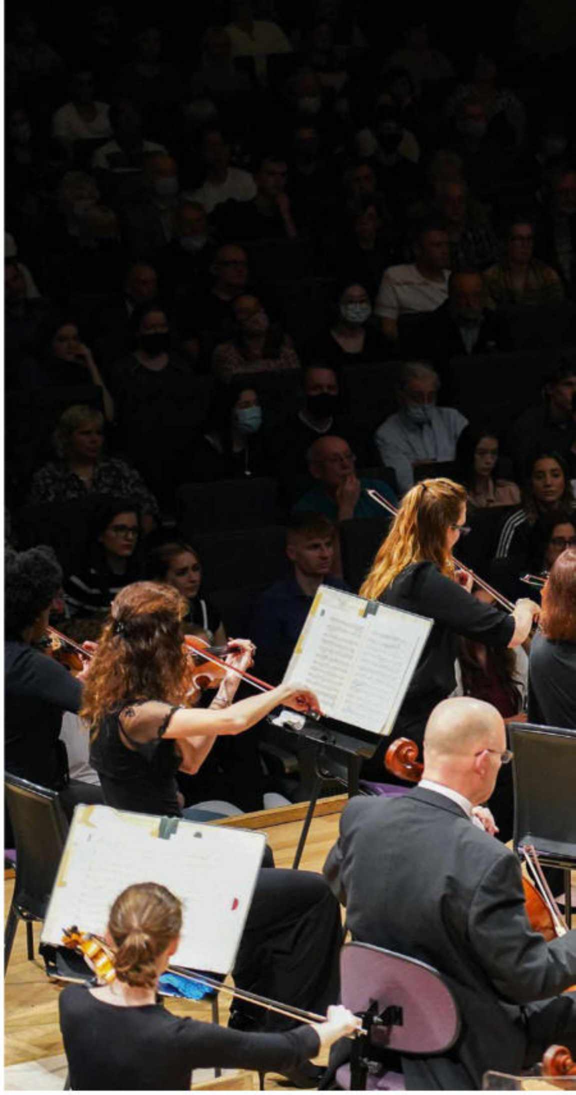
It's also a project that could only have happened as it did in Norway. 'I know there's a huge proportion of the Hallé musicians who get no pleasure from playing Delius. I think most of them are pleased that I did *A Mass of Life* in Bergen, not with them! But for me, he's a great composer, and *A Mass of Life* has something really important to say.'

between performances at the Met in New York. It was Philippe Herreweghe's recording [with the period instruments of the Orchestre des Champs-Élysées] that got me the most. I suddenly understood how Bruckner relates to Schubert, with all those singing lines. And I always knew there was something for me to haul in with the Eighth. But since then, there have been so many other pieces and projects with the Hallé – all the Mahler, the Nielsen, the Shostakovich, all the operas…' And the Elgar, and the Wagner *Ring* Cycle, and the complete Vaughan Williams symphonies, he might have added. 'But having at last found the time to work on it, I said we should do the Eighth now.

'I got no encouragement from my colleagues, because they didn't want to have to try and sell a Bruckner symphony! But we didn't have a bad house yesterday, did we? Probably because of their campaign this season: he's leaving so you'd better come and see him while you can.'

Elder is underselling himself and Bruckner: the response from the Bridgewater Hall audience was as ecstatic as the final moments of the performance were overwhelming. Elder's Brucknerian epiphany in the concert has left its mark. 'I feel completely differently about it now.'

It's hard to imagine now, but when Elder arrived at the Hallé and took up the job in 2000, the orchestra was in a fight for its life, having been days away from financial ruin, and at a creative crossroads after Kent Nagano's tenure. From the start, Elder's mission in Manchester was as much about the Hallé's connection with its communities of audiences and young music-makers as it was about the intensity and excitement of their performances. Elder – and John Summers, who joined as chief executive – mounted a 'two-pronged attack' to turn the Hallé into a vision of what an orchestra needed to be in the 21st century. 'So many things were lacking here,' he remembers. 'I was gobsmacked that there was no youth orchestra. That was just laziness. There was – perhaps I'm allowed to say this now – a complacency about what the Hallé was. It didn't really have a sense of direction and determination.' But the Hallé did have a very good education department, which has grown and grown: '70 per cent of the



orchestra is involved in education work', in schools and communities, and in their rehearsal and education centre, Hallé St Peter's in Ancoats. Elder speaks as proudly about the 'pyramid of choirs' that are part of the Hallé as any of the big performance projects from Wagner to Elgar over the last 24 years. 'We founded the children's choir, a youth choir and a youth training choir, as well as the community choir at Ancoats where there's no audition and anyone can take part. And then there's the main choir. My very first concert with the Hallé was *Belshazzar's Feast* in the early 1980s, so the choir has always been central to me.'

The whole pyramid of Hallé choirs comes together in James MacMillan's commission for Elder's last programme as music director: a piece called *Timotheus, Bacchus and Cecilia*. 'It's about the power of music; it's joyous, celebratory and uses the choirs in a lovely way. It will say something really important, and the size of these choirs will astonish people.'

But the Elder era at the Hallé is defined by the fulfilment of his founding musical

No sweat and tears: Elder conducting the Hallé in Brahms, 2021; (right) in his early days with the orchestra

mission. He gave the orchestra one clear goal: 'I said I wanted us to be the greatest orchestra in the world for playing the music of our country. It was a bold claim, but I thought, "Don't let's pussyfoot around; let's put it up there."' You'd have to be even bolder to say that Elder and the Hallé haven't achieved exactly that. Take the set of Elgar's oratorios released last year on the Hallé's own record label (another early innovation of the Elder-Summers years). Recordings of *The Dream of Gerontius, The Kingdom* and *The Apostles*, originally made between 2008 and '12, are among the most visionary performances of Elgar's music ever made, and the most convincing of the whole trilogy of oratorios: the sound of the radiant community of the Hallé's players and singers raised to new heights by Elgar's music and by Elder's conducting.

Elder's legacy at the Hallé is a living one: it's there in the virtuosity and flexibility of the players and singers he passes on to Kahchun Wong, the Hallé's new principal conductor, who starts later this year, and

GETTY, BILL LAM/THE HALLÉ

'In the last few years, I've relaxed; working with an orchestra is much more collegial'

also in how he's changed as a musician. His personal mission isn't complete. He'll return regularly to Manchester, and he'll do so as a different conductor. Our conversation is shot through with moments when Elder tells me, 'I've changed… I've developed… I've grown up, as a conductor, an artist, a performer' – so much so, that he and the Hallé will release new recordings of Elgar's symphonies. It's difficult to conceive how the previous versions could be more powerful, but they reflect Elder's ongoing musical journey.

So what is the change he's talking about? 'I'm much freer. I've learnt to be more relaxed in myself, and I can allow the musicians to do what they need to do, rather than forcing it out of them. As I get older, I know that better conducting is related to letting go. I don't perspire now – I used to have to change my outfits all the time, and I never understood what Strauss meant when he said that conductors shouldn't sweat, they should make sure the orchestra does.' (Adrian Boult met Elder after a performance early in his career and said, 'I see you're one of the sweaty ones…') 'But in the last few years, I've deeply relaxed, and the whole business of working with an orchestra is much more collegial.'

It's a letting go that releases an uncanny energy in performances like Bruckner's Eighth, in which the line that connected the dizzying discontinuities of Bruckner's final movement was never lost, a connective symphonic momentum between Elder and the players, the sound of the 24-year trust between them.

And there's still further to go. Elder wants to deepen his relationship with the music he loves best. 'I shan't be an old man thinking, "I never did Mahler 7!" I'll think, "I really got somewhere with the Ninth, with the Third – which I like much more than the Second – and with the Fifth."'

Mahler's Fifth is the swansong of Elder's music directorship, in concerts in the summer, a journey from tragedy to radiant joyfulness. It's a trajectory that expresses the fulfilment of Elder's time with the Hallé. But it's also an upbeat to the next stage of Elder's music-making: his search for even greater connection, the place where his new-found state of 'letting go' allows his musicians to dive deeper and bloom brighter. That Bruckner Eight, it turns out, is only the start.

Time for launch: violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter in 1992 and on our debut issue cover; (below) first editor Fiona Maddocks; (below right) astronaut Mae Jemison

THE BIG 400!

BBC Music Magazine has reached its 400th issue! To celebrate, we look back over eight milestone issues since the very first in 1992

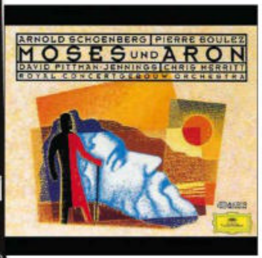
You think you've got issues? Well, we've got 400 of them. Since September 1992, each month (plus, more recently, Christmas too) has been marked by the arrival of a new installment of *BBC Music Magazine,* with news, reviews, interviews, a cover CD of complete works… and much more. Staff and writers come and go, and BBC MM HQ has shunted from London to Bristol to various lockdown homes, but the essence of the magazine remains the same. If you have been with us from the outset, thank you! By way of a reminder – or, if you have joined us more recently, as an introduction – here is a look back at our journey so far, presented in eight installments…

Issue 1 September 1992

On the cover: Anne-Sophie Mutter
Cover CD: **Tchaikovsky** 'Pathétique' Symphony No. 6; **Britten** Sinfonia da Requiem
Review special: Glenn Gould Edition: **Beethoven** Complete Piano Concertos; **JS Bach** Keyboard Concertos, Goldberg Variations

'Welcome to *BBC Music Magazine*, the first magazine to cover all areas of classical music,' wrote editor Fiona Maddocks in our very first issue, before setting out the magazine's intention to appeal to musical beginners and experts alike with a welcoming and unpretentious tone: 'As one who has loved and studied music all my life, played chamber music and listened avidly to Radio 3, I am all too aware that there is ever more to learn – the expert in one area is a beginner in another. So, I hope this magazine will appeal both to the absolute newcomer and to those with years of musical experience behind them.'

True to her word, Maddocks's September 1992 issue was a lively melting pot, including a cover interview with 29-year-old 'veteran' of the stage violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, plus illuminating articles on the Vienna Philharmonic's 150th anniversary and on wealthy 'Modern Medicis' dedicated to supporting worthy musical causes. Already, several magazine stalwarts were present: Jerrold Northrop Moore picked Julian Lloyd Webber and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted



by Yehudi Menuhin as his favourite Elgar Cello Concerto recording in our first *Building a Library*, and the back page *Music That Changed Me* slot featured conductor Mark Elder (see p32). Yet to make an appearance was Recording of the Month – instead, a Review Special assessing the first three albums of Sony's new Glenn Gould Edition proclaimed him 'a very peculiar pianist'. And in place of *Composer of the Month, Brian Kay's Starter Collection* offered up 'four essential performances of the classical repertoire' for new CD collectors.

Also in September 1992: Mae Jemison (below) became the first African American woman to go into space, on board *Endeavour STS-47*; on 'Black Wednesday', the UK government was forced to withdraw pound sterling from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism as it fell below the agreed lowest limit; presented by Chris Evans, Gaby Roslin and Paula Yates, morning TV show *The Big Breakfast* launched on Channel 4.

Issue 50 October 1996

On the cover: Mstislav Rostropovich
Cover CD: Shostakovich Symphony No. 2; Prokofiev Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution
Feature Review: Schoenberg Moses und Aron (David Pittman-Jennings et al; Netherlands Opera Chorus, Royal Concertgebouw/Pierre Boulez)

As Mstislav Rostropovich prepared for two British premieres – of new cello concertos by Colin Matthews and James MacMillan – the Russian cellist spared time for a little catch-up. 'I used to drink vodka with Shostakovich, but if he appeared here today I wouldn't dare,' was just one of the memorable insights and vignettes Slava treated us to. Elsewhere, minimalism's main man Steve Reich marked his 60th birthday by sitting down with David Owen Norris to survey the state of modern music. 'There's a centrifugal whirlpool of technology growing ever deeper and more powerful,' he noted. On our news pages, recent rumours that the Vienna Philharmonic was to admit women for the first time were being dismissed (the rule was finally changed the following year). We also learned that the London Mozart Players had become the first British-sponsored cultural visitors to Bosnia since the outbreak of war there in 1992, and that five Oxfordshire residents had each been awarded £200 in compensation for noise pollution they had suffered from the nearby Garsington Opera. The radio listings were packed with programmes celebrating 50 years of BBC Radio 3, while our obituaries column marked the deaths of conducting greats Rafael Kubelík and Sergiu Celibidache.

Also in October 1996: As a UK general election loomed in the new year, former Tory MP Peter Thurnham pledged his allegiance to the Lib Dems; Damon Hill won his only Formula One championship; Rupert Murdoch and Roger Ailes launched Fox News in the US; tennis player and fashion label founder René Lacoste died aged 92.

Family affair: Yan Pascal Tortelier (on left) talked about his father Paul (conducting) in our 100th issue (below); (above right) our October 1996 issue, in which Pierre Boulez's Schoenberg *Moses und Aron* was the subject of the Feature Review

Issue 100 December 2000

On the cover: Barbara Bonney
Cover CD: Tchaikovsky Sleeping Beauty
Editor's Choice: R Schumann Violin Sonatas Nos 1-3 (Isabelle Faust, Silke Avenhaus)

Donning a range of cosy knitwear and soft furs, Barbara Bonney took the cover of our 100th issue, outlining her plans to move away from the opera stage and focus on teaching (and playing golf). We can only guess what the American soprano might have made of the advert for a well known hi-fi brand that, lurking just a few pages away, told us 'I like my cars fast, my beer cold, my women exciting...'

Elsewhere, violinist-turned-conductor Yan Pascal Tortelier opened up about his complex relationship with his father, the legendary cellist Paul Tortelier, and a William Blake exhibition in London and New York was the inspiration for a feature examining how Britten and his contemporaries were inspired by the

Claim your free issue

Here's your chance to sample an issue of *Gardens Illustrated* – the world's most beautiful gardens magazine – absolutely free

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED
CELEBRATING RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW

Download your digital edition here

SCAN ME

or visit **try.gardensillustrated.com/chelsea24** quoting code **GIHFR524**

Offer ends 12 July 2024

Centenary appearance: (right) Michael Tippett was celebrated in Issue 150, including on the cover CD (above); (below) Ellen MacArthur, sailor supreme

visionary poet. The editorial team's look back over the year's recording highlights singled out the likes of Pierre-Laurent Aimard's Messiaen *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* and the Gabrieli Consort's rendition of Handel's *Theodora*, while Stephen Moss's profile of conductor John Eliot Gardiner pulled no punches. 'Gardiner is a bully, a tyrant, a monster, a musical demon willing to sacrifice musicians in the cause of art. Or so the press assures us,' wrote Moss. 'Classical music insiders nod sagely and tut-tut about Gardiner's behaviour, yet they fail to make a coherent case against him.'

Also in December 2000: An extraordinarily close US presidential election finally went the way of George W Bush, when the Supreme Court rejected demands for a recount in Florida; English singer Kirsty MacColl was killed by a powerboat while diving off the coast of Mexico; Madonna married film director Guy Ritchie at Skibo Castle, Scotland.

Issue 150 February 2005

On the cover: **Jacqueline du Pré**
Cover CD: **Elgar** Enigma Variations; **Vaughan Williams** Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus; **Tippett** Ritual Dances from The Midsummer Marriage
Disc of the Month: **Richard Strauss** Arias (Natalie Dessay; Royal Opera House Orchestra/ Antonio Pappano)

Three anniversaries dominated our 150th issue, each tinged with various degrees of sadness. At the more celebratory end of the scale was the centenary of Michael Tippett's birth. A starry array of composers, conductors and performers lined up to sing his praises, and among the tributes from Alexander Goehr,

GETTY

A starry array of musicians lined up to sing the praises of Michael Tippett

Mark-Anthony Turnage, Peter Maxwell Davies, Oliver Knussen, Peter Hall and Colin Davis, trumpeter James Watson perhaps put it best: 'He gave us the idea that anything was attainable: we weren't afraid of anything.'

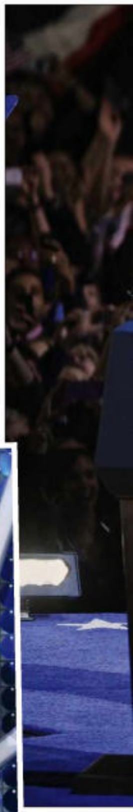
While Tippett lived to 93, cellist Jacqueline du Pré's life was cruelly cut short by multiple sclerosis, an important and tragic component of her allure, summed up in our 60th-anniversary headline: 'Forever young'. Elizabeth Wilson's article again called on some heavy hitters to share their personal memories, including filmmaker Christopher Nupen, cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and violinist/conductor Uto Ughi, who reflected: 'She was in her natural element only when playing the cello, which was as necessary to her as breathing air'. Thirdly, the issue included photographs from a BBC film marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. It's well known that prisoners furnished the Nazi concentration camp with music, and the BBC's memorial featured performances by well-known artists including violinist Maxim Vengerov. Elsewhere in the issue, a new series lifted the curtain on opera direction, initially on the set of Jonathan Miller's Mozart *Così fan tutte*, and conductor David Willcocks shared his *Music That Changed Me*.

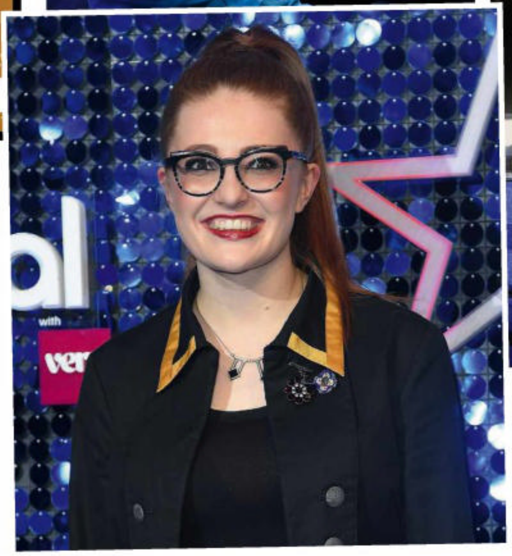
Also in February 2005: As he marked his 2,838th day in office, Tony Blair became the longest-serving Labour prime minister in history; yachtswoman Ellen MacArthur broke the record for the fastest solo round-the-world sail, completing the journey in 71 days, 14 hours, 18 minutes and 33 seconds; and Charles, Prince of Wales, announced his engagement to Camilla Parker Bowles.

Issue 200 December 2008

On the cover: **50 Greatest Carols**
Cover CD: **Ravel** Mother Goose; **Prokofiev** Love for Three Oranges Suite; **Suk** Pohádka
Disc of the Month: **Honegger** Cello Concerto; Une Cantate de Noël etc (BBC NOW/Thierry Fischer)

'Tis the season: Our December 2008 cover CD took us on a fairy-tale journey across Europe; (right) Sir Georg Solti is remembered on the November 2012 cover; (below) OJ Simpson appears in court, 2008





As weather presenter Carol Kirkwood delivered her forecast from the Television Centre garden at sunrise one chilly December morning, viewers of *BBC Breakfast* will have noticed a thick-coat-and-scarf-bedecked figure standing slightly awkwardly to her left: Oliver Condy, editor of *BBC Music*, was there to reveal and enthuse about the result of the magazine's recent *50 Greatest Carols* poll, as voted for by 50 leading choir conductors (five votes each). The winner was Harold Darke's setting of *In the bleak midwinter*, which scraped just ahead of Pearsall's *In Dulci Jubilo* and Howells's *A Spotless Rose*. Letters of delight/dismay/disgust (delete as appropriate) soon followed.

Elsewhere, the issue had a distinctly Russian feel to it as we suggested works to enjoy after Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, while Daniel Jaffé – in an even thicker coat – was dispatched to snowy St Petersburg for the monthly travel piece, thawing out just in time to also write our *Composer of the Month* feature on Prokofiev. And in the news, we told how Peter Maxwell Davies had been diddled by his assistant, and reported on the Royal Opera's plan for a new home in Manchester.

Also in December 2008: Former NFL star and actor OJ Simpson was sentenced to 33 years in prison for armed robbery and kidnap; Woolworths announced that it was to close all 807 of its stores in the new year; Madonna divorced film director Guy Ritchie on the grounds of unreasonable behaviour (see Issue 100, p.51)

Issue 250 November 2012

On the cover: Sir Georg Solti
Cover CD: **Bartók** Concerto for Orchestra; **Stravinsky** Petrushka; **Rossini** William Tell Overture
Recording of the Month: **Schubert** String Quartets Nos 10 & 15 (Cuarteto Casals)

On reaching our 250th issue, we took a moment to pause and look back 100 years. 21 October 1912 saw the birth of Georg Solti, whose life and work as one of the world's most dynamic and daring conductors was celebrated by former BBC broadcaster Humphrey Burton. Adding their fond reminiscences to Burton's own – and helping to belie Solti's terrifying reputation as 'the screaming skull' – were two of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra players who the Hungarian led and inspired for so many years.

In the same year as Solti's birth, the players of the London Symphony Orchestra doubtless thanked their lucky stars that, due to last-minute hitches, they had not sailed on the *RMS Titanic* for their April tour of the US, as had been planned. Poring over two of the players' tour diaries, current LSO principal flautist Gareth Davies revealed their various complaints, delights and more – New York, we learn, was a 'quite rotten' city, in which 'we can't get beer, only lager'; however, timpanist Charles Turner did seem quite pleased with his dinner of oysters, soup, salmon, roast lamb and green peas, orange punch and ice cream, roast pigeon with potatoes, salad, asparagus, olives, more ice cream and coffee...

Also sharing their thoughts in the same issue were opera director Graham Vick (*James Naughtie Interview*), jazz pianist Chick Corea (*Music That Changed Me*) and, in the *Rising Stars* slot, a young guitarist called Sean Shibe.

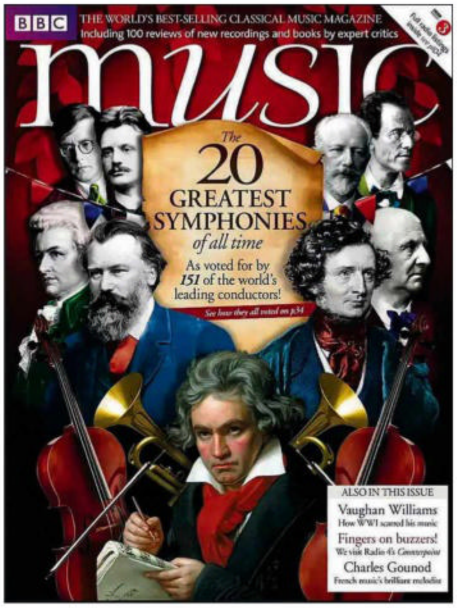
GETTY

Also in November 2012: Barack Obama defeated Mitt Romney in the US presidential election, securing a second term in office; Justin Welby, Bishop of Durham, was named as the next Archbishop of Canterbury; Nadine Dorries MP was suspended by the Conservative Party for absenting herself from Parliament to appear on ITV's *I'm a Celebrity... Get me out of here*.

Issue 300 September 2016

On the cover: The 20 greatest symphonies of all time
Cover CD: Beethoven Symphony No. 3 'Eroica'
Recording of the Month: Arias by Handel, Boyce et al (Allan Clayton; Classical Opera Choir & Orchestra/Ian Page)

We decided to mark our 300th issue with something grand: why not put together (with the help of 150 of the world's leading conductors) a list of the 20 greatest symphonies of all time? And here were the results, with a strong showing for Beethoven (five entries, including the winner, No. 3), Mahler (three – all top ten), Mozart (two), Bruckner (two) and Brahms, all four of whose symphonies made the top 20. Elsewhere, violinist Jennifer Pike



And all that jazz: (far left) Chick Corea shared his favourites in Issue 250; Jess Gillam, Issue 300's Rising Star; (left) Barack Obama is returned as US president, 2012; (above) our September 2016 poll

was James Naughtie's interviewee ('At first I didn't like my violin. Now we're inseparable'), and we marked 30 years of the Radio 4 music quiz *Counterpoint* by sitting in on a recording. Vaughan Williams had a strong showing this month: his Fourth Symphony was the subject of *Building a Library,* while Andrew Green examined the Third Symphony's links to the composer's First World War experiences. Richard Morrison mused on the consequences of the recent Brexit vote for UK classical music, and our Rising Star was 18-year-old saxophonist Jess Gillam, a few months on from winning the *BBC Young Musician* competition on TV.

In the news, we learned that another rising star, 17-year-old cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason, was to get his own BBC documentary, and that a new record had been set for the world's largest orchestra, when 7,548 musicians had gathered in Frankfurt's Commerzbank Arena stadium to perform Beethoven and Dvořák.

Also in September 2016: Diane James quit as leader of UKIP after only 18 days in post; in his last few months in office as US president, Barack Obama announced plans for a human mission to Mars; conductor Sir Neville Marriner died aged 92; and Mother Teresa was canonised by Pope Francis.

Covid would change the classical music scene forever, argued Richard Morrison

Issue 350 July 2020

On the cover: Yo-Yo Ma
Cover CD: Ravel Daphnis et Chloé (below)
Recording of the Month: Shostakovich Violin Concertos (Alina Ibragimova, Orchestra of Russia 'Evgeny Svetlanov'/Vladimir Jurowski)

Having been sent home from the office on 16 March – midway through working on Issue 348 – by now the *BBC Music* editorial team were well into the Covid lockdown routine of putting together a magazine from the (dis)comfort of our bedrooms and dining room tables. In the meantime, we had also put our phones' cameras to good use in presenting the first ever online edition of the annual BBC Music Magazine Awards. Our July issue's news section looked at the concert venues making tentative steps to bring back live music with socially distanced audiences – remember those? – and in his opinion column, Richard Morrison argued that Covid would change the world's classical music scene forever. 'What's clear is that not all of our arts organisations will survive,' he wrote; 'nor will all venues.'

Our cover story saw former editor Helen Wallace Zoom-calling cellist Yo-Yo Ma to discuss *Not Our First Goat Rodeo*, his bluegrass project breaking down barriers between genres. In the *BBC Music Magazine Interview,* Paavo Järvi told us how he was itching to get back to orchestral conducting after having had his schedule wiped out, but we also took a look at the classical musicians who made the best of a bad situation by heading online and hosting lockdown concerts from their homes on social media. Usually, the July issue TV and Radio pages of *BBC Music* are awash with treats promised by the BBC Proms season; this year, things looked drastically different, with highlights from the festival's history broadcast instead.

Also in July 2020: As with much of 2020, July was notable as a month in which things didn't happen, including the Summer Olympics in Tokyo, which were shelved for a year; having witnessed life go from good to bad to ugly, film composing legend Ennio Morricone took his leave from it at 91.

Avian anthems

From Vivaldi to Messiaen, composers have often been inspired by birdsong. But accurately mimicking chirrups and tweets in music is far more difficult than it sounds, finds Tom Stewart

Consider the song of the nightingale. Clangorous, bizarre and almost psychedelic in its complexity, this small brown bird's voice is truly remarkable but really nothing like the sweet, mellifluous crooning you might imagine if you'd never heard one for yourself. But few people these days have: the UK nightingale population, which now stands at around 5,000 pairs, has declined by half in the past three decades alone. Without a real-life reference point, the cliché of the nightingale's superlative melodiousness seems destined to persist.

Composer Alexander Liebermann first encountered a nightingale returning home from a night out in Berlin. It would be many years before he began to incorporate birdsong in his music, but the experience stayed with him. I came across Liebermann on Instagram, where he posted a video of a drummer performing a transcription he'd made of a nightingale's song. Untuned percussion might seem a strange choice but, Liebermann explains, it allowed him to capture the essence of this strange-sounding creature. 'I showed it to my pre-college students at Juilliard without telling them what the piece was about and they weren't too impressed,' he says. 'That all changed after I played the recording of the bird. They were amazed – suddenly they thought the drummer was the best performer they'd ever heard!'

From Vivaldi's 'Goldfinch' Flute Concerto to Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending*, there is no shortage of music that alludes to birdsong. The fact is, however, that most birds sing in ways that sound very abstract in the context of western classical music. But the 20th century brought a blurring of sound and music that liberated composers to take a more literal approach.

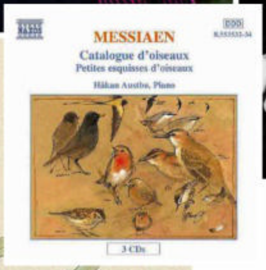
Enter Olivier Messiaen, the composer now most strongly associated with birdsong. The first of Messiaen's scores to make extensive use of birdsong was *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*, written in 1941 when he, unlike the free-flying creatures he was quoting, was interned in a German prisoner-of-war camp. For the next 50 years, Messiaen transcribed by ear the songs of birds from all over the world, though the European species he was most familiar with – particularly the nightingale and blackbird – make the most frequent appearances in his music. Describing birds as 'our little servants of immaterial joy', he made clear both his love for their sounds and his view that they should serve his music, not the other way around.

> The nightingale's voice is nothing like the sweet crooning you might imagine

Messiaen overcame the difficulties posed by birds' use of intervals smaller than a semitone by zooming in, expanding the size of the intervals in relation to each other. A quartertone would

GETTY, PAUL FRANK ROGERS

Sing like a bird: the curlew calling, as interpreted by pianist Rolf Hind (right), who has performed Messiaen's (far right) *Catalogue d'oiseaux*



be replaced by a semitone, for example, and a semitone by a tone to preserve the relationship between the pitches. But while this technique maintains the shape of the line, it obscures its original source material. In his birdsong pieces, Liebermann takes a different approach, using arrows to indicate that a pitch should be played slightly flatter or sharper. 'I try to be as true as possible to nature. Sometimes you do have to change things, particularly when the bird sings higher than the range of the instrument.' Messiaen's music is hardly straightforward for performers, but Liebermann's is sometimes even less so. 'The performers I've worked with aren't fazed, though; they're just amazed at what nature can do.'

Whereas Messiaen made his transcriptions in the field, jotting down birdsong as he encountered it, Liebermann uses software to slow down recordings of birds and works out the pitches at the piano. He says the approach allows him to create a much more accurate impression of the bird, though listening again and again comes with its own challenges. 'After you've heard it a hundred times you realise the main pitch is different from the one you had previously thought, or you pick up notes that you would never have detected if you played it at actual speed. Then you have to make a decision: which sounds do you notate?'

Pianist and composer Rolf Hind has performed many of Messiaen's birdsong pieces and played for the composer in the final years of his life. 'His music has as a very strong personality, so often its harmony and its textures are him, not the birds,' he says. By way of an example, he plays me the 'Curlew' ('Courlis cendré') from Messiaen's *Catalogue d'oiseaux*. Large wading birds with extremely long bills, curlews don't sing so much as emit a single note that rises plaintively over the marshes and shorelines where they spend

A little cuckoo

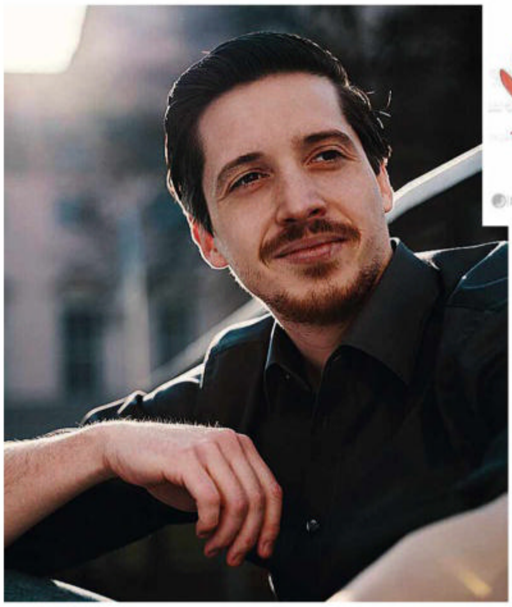
The most iconic call

Perhaps the best-known birdsong of all – or at least the most imitable – is that of the cuckoo (pictured above, calling). The soft but far-carrying two-note song of the male is an iconic sound of spring, albeit one that is fading fast from the British countryside (in the United Kingdom, as elsewhere in the world, the cuckoo's population is in freefall).

One of the earliest musical cuckoos appears in 'Sumer is icumen in', a 13th-century polyphonic song that celebrates the sights and sounds of summer. Cuckoos in music tend to evoke rural idylls, as in the slow *Szene am Bach* movement of Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony, the first movement *Langsam, schleppend* of Mahler's Symphony No. 1 or Britten's dreamy *Friday Afternoons*.

In nature, the interval between the two pitches of the male's song range somewhere between a minor third and a perfect fourth. The songs of two or more birds might overlap where more than one male is competing for the same female. Perhaps this was the inspiration for the two cuckoos, placed a tritone apart, that appear in György Ligeti's *Nonsense Madrigals* of 1988-93.

GETTY, ANNA STARK



Getting back to nature: Alexander Liebermann and his book of music based on birdsong; (below) the Hawaiian Kaua'i 'ō'ō

their lives. Messiaen adds a major sixth above the rapid chromatic scale of the curlew's voice, with colourful chords deep in the piano's bottom register representing the crash of the waves.

'I think of the harmony like an organ stop that illuminates the song,' says Hind. He explains that birdsong was not only a source of melodic material for Messiaen but also a means of structuring his music. 'He discovered that he could make very long pieces just by creating structures out of mosaic material. In the *Catalogue d'oiseaux* there are strophes of birdsong that Messiaen interrupts, often with another natural image. I've always found this music to be metaphysical, almost magical – it actually becomes the thing he's writing about.'

Birds take the prize of nature's most musical creatures and now is the best time to hear them for yourself. As winter moves into spring, many species return from their wintering grounds in Africa and southern Europe to join our resident songsters. International Dawn Chorus Day is on Sunday 5 May, more or less the peak time for birdsong in the northern hemisphere. This is followed by relative silence in the hotter months, when most birds are busy raising young and staying hidden from predators.

'Mostly, birds sing to attract a mate: "Look, I'm here, I'm gorgeous, make chicks with me,"' explains Dr Viola Ross-Smith from the British Trust for Ornithology. The area of the brain involved in learning and producing a song is only present in three bird families, she says. These are the passerines (comprising various 'songbirds' as well as crows and birds-of-paradise), hummingbirds and parrots. 'The ability to sing appears to have evolved separately in each family. But for songbirds in the UK, it's a bit like how a baby learns to talk. There's a period when their brains are very sensitive to what they hear around them, with these sounds eventually crystallising into the individual bird's own song.'

Some birds go on learning songs throughout their lives, Ross-Smith says. Unlike humans, these types continue to produce new neurons as they age. 'If you hear people speaking Chinese when you're two years old, you'll learn to make sounds you'd never be able to produce if you didn't hear it until you were 20,' she explains. 'Some birds aren't limited like this, so they go on learning in a more expansive and dramatic way. These tend to be the ones that eventually develop huge repertoires of different sounds.' One such bird is the marsh warbler, which migrates each year between northern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. The average male can imitate more than 70 other species from both Africa and Europe.

I play Ross-Smith Messiaen's version of nightingale song, taken from the opening of the composer's 1953 piano concerto *Réveil des oiseaux*. She isn't convinced. This comes as no surprise to Liebermann, who says many people are sceptical of Messiaen's birdsong. However, he continues, accuracy has a role to play in educating people not only about birds themselves but also the threats they face. 'We're tired of hearing about these issues from politicians. As artists we can reach audiences in a different way; that's our role in changing people's minds.'

Liebermann's transcription of the Kaua'i 'ō'ō, a bird native to the Hawaiian island of Kaua'i, is one example of a piece that sets out to do just that. Habitat loss and the introduction of predators drove the species to extinction in the 1980s, but a recording exists of the last known male, which leaves long pauses between its vocalisations to be filled by those of its long-lost mate. Liebermann used this as the basis for his own piece. 'As humans we don't see the impact of our actions; we don't see the coffee cup we threw in the trash float into the ocean,' he says. Can music bridge the gap? 'When I explain the piece to the audience and play them the original recording, it becomes clear that even the best performer in the world can't play the song as beautifully as that last lonely bird sang it. Only then do you realise what we stand to lose.'

DUTTON EPOCH NEW RELEASE

CDLX 7411

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

The Future, The Steersman, Fantasia for piano and orchestra
Lucy Crowe soprano, Jacques Imbrailo baritone, Andrew Von Oeyen piano
BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA & CHORUS
Martin Yates conductor

2-CD SET • 2CDLX 7408

STATE FAIR AND THE 20TH CENTURY-FOX SONGBOOK

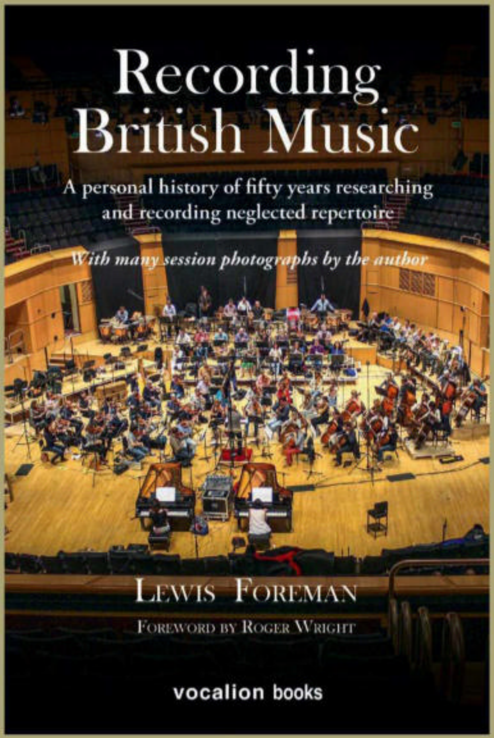
with guest star Michael Feinstein
featuring Scarlett Strallen, Clare Teal, James Taylor & Derek Greten-Harrison
BBC CONCERT ORCHESTRA & SINGERS
David Charles Abell conductor

CDLX 7410

CDLX 7413

CDLX 7409

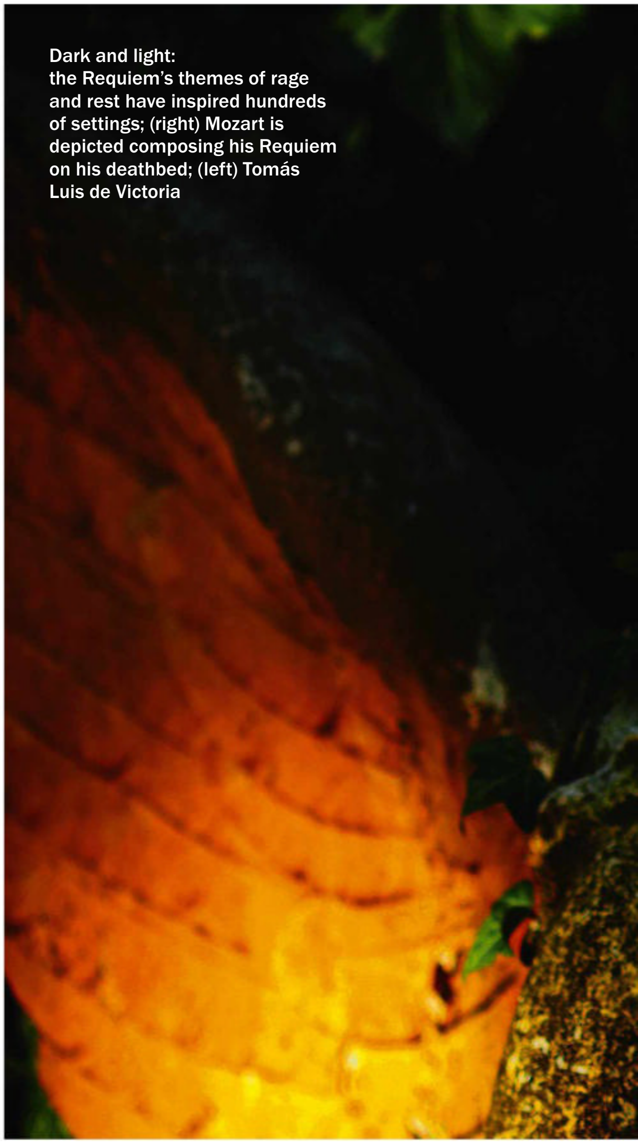
CDLX 7412



VOCBK 1803

For full release details visit www.duttonvocalion.co.uk | Many titles in the Dutton Epoch series are available on iTunes
Dutton Epoch | PO Box 609 | Watford WD18 7YA | T: 01923 803 001 | info@duttonvocalion.co.uk

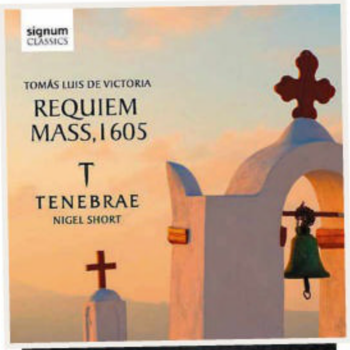
The BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, BBC Singers and BBC Radio 3 logos are trademarks of the BBC and are used under licence.



Dark and light: the Requiem's themes of rage and rest have inspired hundreds of settings; (right) Mozart is depicted composing his Requiem on his deathbed; (left) Tomás Luis de Victoria

Music to die for

From wrathful Verdi to ethereal Fauré, there are many different ways to compose a Requiem, as Jeremy Pound discovers



Blood and thunder rating

- 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥 Be very afraid
- 🔥🔥🔥🔥 Day of wrath
- 🔥🔥🔥 Judgement awaits
- 🔥🔥 It's not all bad
- 🔥 Rest in peace
- Death is sweet

'I think it has to be Brahms,' replies composer Michael John Trotta, when asked by *BBC Music* to name his favourite Requiem. 'It's partly to do with how he brought the language into the vernacular and included additional texts. And then there's that ticking at the beginning – "bom, bom, bom" – along with the vulnerability of the viola. I also remember singing the "How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place" movement as a schoolboy and feeling enveloped by the music's warm hug!'

But soon afterwards Trotta, who has recently completed his own Requiem (see p48), changes his mind. 'I wish I had answered Mozart for my favourite Requiem,' he emails. 'There's something about how he both acknowledged and transcended tradition...'

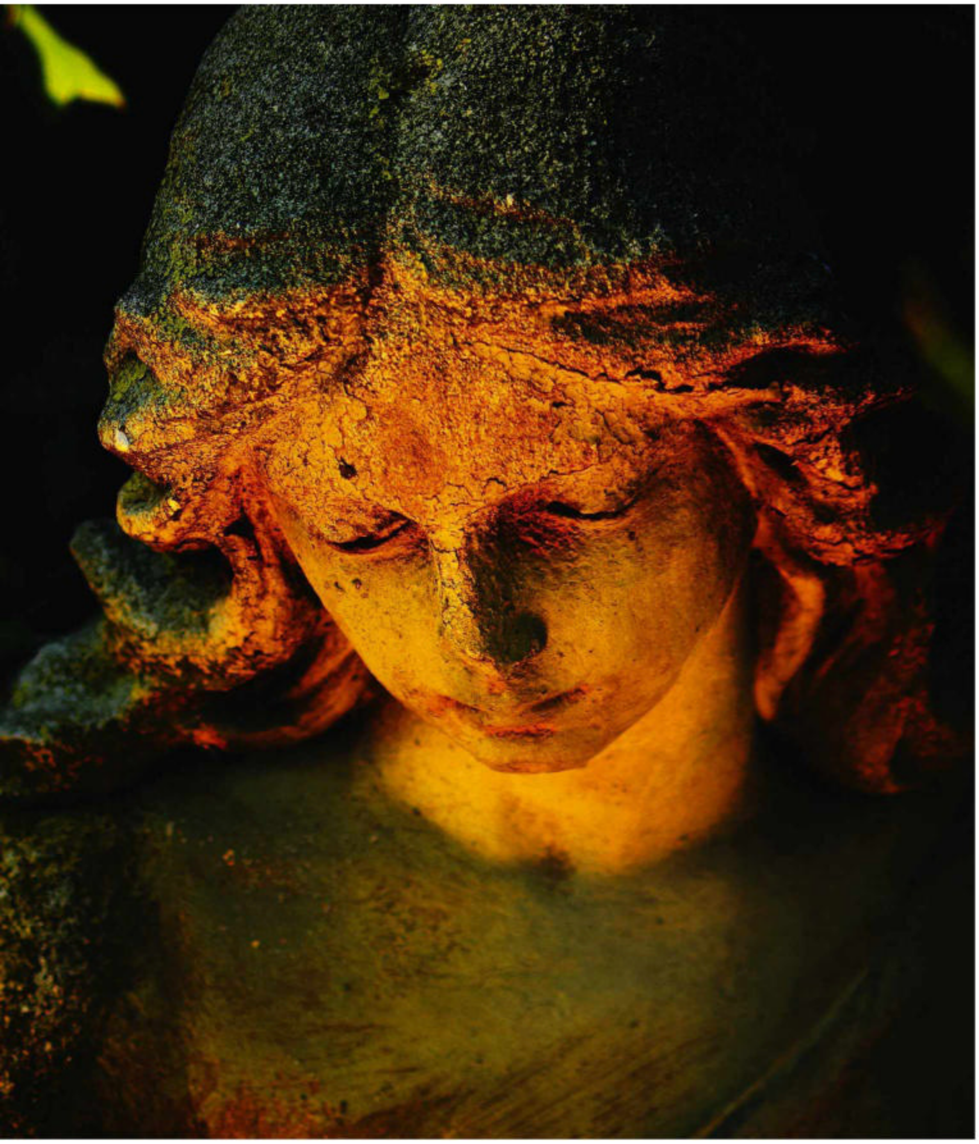
It was, of course, an unfair question. From Dufay and Ockeghem in the 15th century to Karl Jenkins and Rebecca Dale in the 21st, many of music's most accomplished and popular composers have written Requiems. Of those, several are considered masterpieces. How do you choose from such a list?

The title 'Requiem' comes from 'Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine' ('Grant them eternal rest, O Lord), the first sentence of the Introit of the Catholic Mass for the Dead. Standardised in the mid-16th century by the Council of Trent (which was looking nervously over its shoulder at the rise of Protestantism), the sections of the Requiem Mass – Introit, Kyrie, Gradual, Tract, Dies Irae Sequence, Offertory, Sanctus, Agnus Dei and Communion – provided a basic framework for settings to music, with composers omitting parts, adding other material and elaborating the format as they saw fit.

And it's this spirit of elaboration that has brought about such a wide range of Requiems over the centuries, in terms of tone – from blood and thunder to gently acquiescent (see rating guide, left) – style, length, performing forces and, not least, the words. In fact, as our look at some of the best known and most groundbreaking examples reveals, the theme of death is about the only thing they all have in common...

Tomás Luis de Victoria
Officium Defunctorum (Requiem) (1605)

The first of the great Requiems? The Spanish composer wrote his setting for six voices – he'd also written one for four voices 20 years earlier – in response to the death of his boss, the Dowager Empress María, choosing to omit the mass's Dies Irae (Day of Anger) Sequence of texts as he did so. Added to the front, however, was 'Taedet animam meam', setting an ultra-gloomy moment from the Book of Job, while the work



is rounded off by the funeral motet 'Versa est in luctum' and the responsory 'Libera me'. Each section of this immaculately crafted, stunningly expressive work is prefaced by a section of plainchant which – listen closely – you can then hear paraphrased in the second soprano line.

Blood and thunder: 🔥🔥😇😇😇

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Requiem in D minor (1791)

Forget those stories of Mozart's Requiem being commissioned in the dead of night by a dark, mysterious stranger and all. Intriguing, but bumph. What we do know is that the composer's handwritten score suddenly breaks off in the eighth bar of the devastating 'Lacrimosa', the sixth movement in the Dies Irae section – this is the point at which he died. Of the work we know today, only the Introitus was written in full by Mozart, the rest left in various states of incompletion or not even begun. Though scholars like to pick holes in the completion of Mozart's Requiem by his pupil Franz Xaver Süssmayr, the latter did at least present something that is admired for its precision, structure, ingenious interaction between voices and instruments and, of course, sheer beauty.

Blood and thunder: 🔥🔥🔥😇😇

GETTY

> 'While Mozart had liturgical performances in mind, Berlioz took the Requiem into the realm of the concert showpiece, with the 'Tuba Mirum' its tour de force'

Hector Berlioz

Grande Messe des morts (1837)

When Berlioz was invited to compose a Requiem Mass in honour of the soldiers who had died in France's 1830 Revolution, he thought big. Very big. The resulting *Grande Messe des morts* (Great mass for the dead) is scored for an enormous orchestra that includes no fewer than 16 timpani and four off-stage brass ensembles. A mere 400-or-so performers gave the work's premiere at Les Invalides in Paris in 1837, but the composer gave instructions for what to do if a choir of up to 800 singers was involved. While Mozart had liturgical performances in mind, Berlioz took the Requiem very much into the realm of the concert showpiece, with the Dies Irae's 'Tuba Mirum' its earth-shattering tour de force.

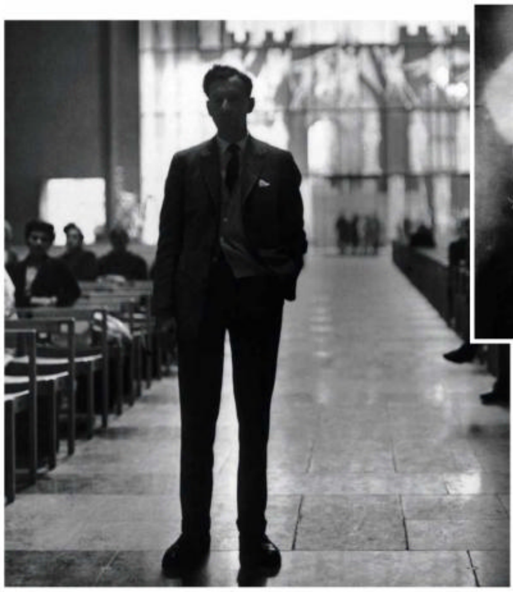
Blood and thunder: 🔥🔥🔥🔥😇

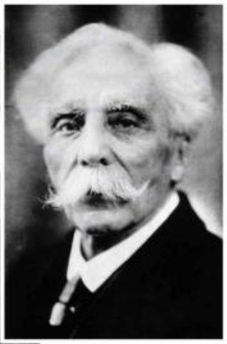
Johannes Brahms

A German Requiem (1868)

Confirmed in a Lutheran church as a boy, Brahms stuck a metaphorical red pen through the Catholic Mass and went in search of his own texts. His *Ein deutsches Requiem* features words from across the Old and New Testaments, sung in his own language – accessibility was the key for Brahms, who suggested that his work could just as easily have been titled *Ein menschliches Requiem* (A Human Requiem). The ominous funereal tread of 'Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras' aside, *Ein deutsches Requiem* presents a largely benign view of death and the afterlife, beginning with 'Blessed are they that mourn' from the Beatitudes and ending with 'Blessed are the dead' from the Book of Revelation.

Blood and thunder: 🔥😇😇😇😇





War and peace: (far left) Britten at a rehearsal for his *War Requiem* in Coventry Cathedral, 1962; (left) Fauré saw death as a 'joyful deliverance'

Parting notes

How to write a Requiem

'When you experience personal loss,' reflects composer Michael John Trotta (above), 'within a couple of weeks everybody else's lives have gone back to being the same. However, there's something that you yourself can never quite put back together. I think my Requiem is my attempt to make peace with all of that.'

Trotta, whose Requiem for choir and organ has been recorded by Tenebrae, says he has long had the idea of writing such a work, but had to develop the right musical language first. 'Over time, I've found my work becoming more and more unencumbered. It's a case of addition by subtraction – what can I take away so we're left with just the essence of what I am trying to communicate? I've used the traditional texts and the original chants, yet tried to arrange them in a way that still has a resonance with a modern audience.'

A devoted Requiem scholar, Trotta pays a nod to Duruflé for his use of chant, and is also inspired by the contrast of light and dark: 'I love that play back and forth between Requiem Aeternam and Dies Irae – for me, that is hope and fear. And ideally, at the end we're left with something that makes us feel a little bit more hopeful.'

Tenebrae's recording of Michael John Trotta's Requiem is out on 3 May

BEN EALOVEGA, GETTY

Giuseppe Verdi *Messa da Requiem (1874)*

Verdi had no time for such warm words of comfort. 'We're doomed!' is the general gist of his Requiem, a work spurred on by the death of the novelist Alessandro Manzoni. Introduced by terrifying thwacks of the bass drum and cascading chorus, the huge Dies Irae section dominates a Requiem that throughout leans towards the theatrical – with its demanding, dramatic solo parts, little wonder that conductor Hans von Bülow initially described it as 'Verdi's latest opera, though in ecclesiastical robes'. Among the pleas for mercy and dark forebodings comes a brief chink of light in the 'Tuba Mirum' brass fanfare – a moment sampled by Take That in 1995 in their No. 1 hit 'Never Forget'.

Blood and thunder:

Gabriel Fauré *Requiem in D minor (1890)*

Verdi's hell-and-damnation Requiem centres on the Dies Irae; Fauré leaves it out entirely. No surprise, given that this is the handiwork of a composer who, describing death as 'a joyful deliverance', said his aim was 'to stray away from the established path after all those years accompanying funerals' and even told a friend that he composed it 'for pleasure… if I may be permitted to say so!' The Frenchman tinkered no end with his Requiem between first setting pen to paper in 1887 and producing the final version for soloists, choir and symphony orchestra in 1900. It was performed at his own funeral in 1924, and moments such as the soprano's beatific 'Pie Jesu' remain as popular as ever 100 years on.

Blood and thunder:

Herbert Howells *Requiem (1932)*

What prompts a composer to write a Requiem? Specific commissions aside, in some instances the loss of a loved one provides the impetus – Brahms, for instance, began his shortly after his mother died. It was largely believed that Howells composed his Requiem in response to the death of his nine-year-old son Michael… until recent research showed that the work predated that tragedy. Combining Latin and English texts from the Psalms and the Latin Mass, the 20-minute work creates its sense of contemplative stillness by means of unaccompanied four-part choir plus two soloists – a world away from Berlioz's and Verdi's aural assaults by percussion and brass.

Blood and thunder:

Maurice Duruflé *Requiem (1947)*

Long before even Dufay and Ockeghem came on the scene, the Mass of the Dead enjoyed a musical existence in the form of Gregorian chant. It is these chants that form the bedrock of Duruflé's Requiem, their melodies heard clearly yet wrapped up in the French composer's own distinctive harmonic language. Like Fauré, Duruflé chose to omit the Dies Irae from his Requiem which, notwithstanding the impassioned 'Pie Jesu' mezzo solo, has a similarly acquiescent feel. Scored for either organ or orchestral accompaniment, it is the Requiem with the least likely (and most controversial) genesis – Duruflé initially set to work on it in 1941 in response to a well-funded competition set up by the collaborationist Vichy regime.

Blood and thunder:

Benjamin Britten *War Requiem (1962)*

Never one to refrain from throwing a hissy fit, Britten approached the premiere of his *War Requiem* at the new Coventry Cathedral in May 1962 by taking issue with the chorus, the orchestra, the chamber ensemble, the concert programme notes, the cathedral's clergy… and the building itself. He also thought little of the performance, though the work proved an instant hit both with the critics and those listening in on the radio. Large-scale in terms of both length and performing forces – soloists, chorus and orchestra, plus a separate chamber orchestra and boys' choir – the *War Requiem* broke new ground by interspersing the sections of the Latin Mass with poetry by Wilfred Owen, killed in the last days of World War I. And for all those vast forces on stage, moments such as 'Strange Meeting', sung by tenor and baritone soloists, are equally intimate and poignant.

Blood and thunder:

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

CURATE YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE WITH OUR MULTI-BUY OFFER

Classical Music

AUTUMN/WINTER 2024/25

THOMAS ADÉS • LOUISE ALDER • MARIN ALSOP
DANIEL BARENBOIM & WEST-EASTERN DIVAN ORCHESTRA
MATTHEW BARLEY • BENJAMIN GROSVENOR QUARTET
JONATHAN BERMAN • HERBERT BLOMSTEDT • BORODIN QUARTET
KALENA BOVELL • KARINA CANELLAKIS • JOYCE DIDONATO • MARÍA DUEÑAS
KEVIN JOHN EDUSEI • ÁDÁM FISCHER • JESS GILLAM • STEPHEN HOUGH
ALICE IVY-PEMBERTON • ZUBIN KANGA • ISATA KANNEH-MASON
LEONIDAS KAVAKOS • AMJAD ALI KHAN • VADYM KHOLODENKO • BOMSORI KIM
PAVEL KOLESNIKOV • PATRICIA KOPATCHINSKAJA
IGOR LEVIT • MANCHESTER COLLECTIVE • JAMES MCVINNIE • TRULS MØRK
THE MULTI-STORY ORCHESTRA • VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON & YUJA WANG
PARAORCHESTRA • LAWRENCE POWER • NEMANJA RADULOVIĆ
JEAN RONDEAU • ESA-PEKKA SALONEN • ANDRÁS SCHIFF
SCOTTISH ENSEMBLE • ABEL SELAOCOE • JACK SHEEN
ALEXANDRE THARAUD • NOBUYUKI TSUJII

This is classical music in the 21st century

BOOK NOW

OUR RESIDENT ORCHESTRAS:

Aurora Orchestra
CHINEKE!
London Philharmonic Orchestra
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
Philharmonia
London Sinfonietta

LOTTERY FUNDED
Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

MARCO BORGGREVE, GETTY

The mighty Sampson

As soprano Carolyn Sampson turns 50, she tells Ashutosh Khandekar about the development of her voice through a remarkable catalogue of recordings

'They're such nice numbers!' It's an unusual observation from a singer – but then Carolyn Sampson is the daughter of two maths teachers, so perhaps she appreciates more than most the beauty of the numerical coincidence that has taken place in her life. Sampson will turn 50 on 18 May. Meanwhile, she has celebrated the release of her 100th album, *but I like to sing...*. And crowning a career of accolades, this January she was awarded an OBE for services to music.

Her new album, released on BIS, takes its title from a line in Leonard Bernstein's song 'I Hate Music!', a tongue-in-cheek commentary on concert going and the snobbery that exists around it ('...A lot of chairs with a lot of airs'). The sentiment suits Sampson's quietly irreverent, down-to-earth nature. Launched at a recital at Wigmore Hall in London last December, *but I like to sing...* shows off her extraordinary range, inventiveness and stylistic versatility, from classic German lieder to unfamiliar (but stunningly beautiful) French chanson and contemporary song. It all feels very personal, but with a forward-looking thrust. 'There are songs that have meant a lot to me through my life, but it isn't intended as a "career retrospective". There are new discoveries and some fresh thinking that I hope will point the way for my future.'

Included is a piece Sampson commissioned from Deborah Pritchard: 'Everyone Sang' is a setting of a poem by Siegfried Sassoon which celebrates the power of song. 'I'm very keen to commission new songs – and I'm lucky to have a platform to do it,' Sampson says. 'It's really important that classical music doesn't get trapped in a bubble. We have to keep communicating the wonderful thing we do, without apologising for it. My question is, how do we commission new stuff that doesn't clash with tradition? That's the beauty of a song recital: you can have new compositional voices working within a familiar context.'

Pushing the envelope without spilling its contents has been a feature of Sampson's career. Her first study at Birmingham University was piano, 'but I soon discovered that the world was full of amazing pianists, who were far, far, better than me – so I started concentrating on my voice.

> 'We have to keep communicating the wonderful thing we do, without apologising'

At that point I had an ambitious teacher who wanted me to sing Verdi, which definitely wasn't where my voice was at that point. So, I worked on regaining my natural sound, which had become overlain by a "manufactured" vibrato.' She demonstrates with a pseudo-operatic wobble.

Having restored her voice to its exquisite, unaffected state, the 19-year-old Carolyn bounded into the early music scene that was burgeoning in Birmingham thanks to Jeffrey Skidmore and his ensemble Ex Cathedra. He encouraged her to make her first solo recording, *Règne Amour,* a collection of love songs from operas by Rameau. There was some scepticism as to whether a British group would be able to grasp Rameau's quintessentially Gallic style, but

The brighter side: Sampson's voice is known for its light and radiance; (top) performing Handel with the Gabrieli Consort and Players at Alice Tully Hall, NY, 2002; her first solo album, *Règne Amour*

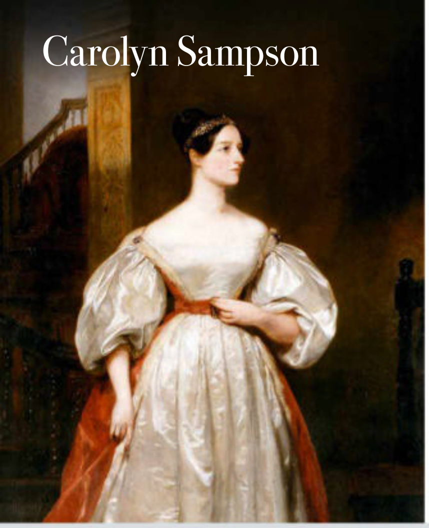
Sampson and Skidmore nailed it. *BBC Music Magazine*'s reviewer judged Sampson's voice to be 'well-nigh ideal' in this repertoire.

Ex Cathedra provided a complete training ground for Sampson. Building on the musicianship she'd developed in Bedfordshire's strong youth and music tradition, she learnt how to sing on the job and was soon in demand with the leading early music ensembles of the day: Harry Christophers and The Sixteen, Robert King and The King's Consort (where she got her first big break as a Bach soloist), Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert and, most significantly, with Masaaki Suzuki and the Bach Collegium Japan, whose complete Bach Cantatas project sealed her reputation in the first decade of the new millennium as the go-to Bach soprano of her generation.

Her twenties, Sampson recalls, were a blast as her international career flourished and she made her first forays into opera. Her debut came in the cameo role of Amore in English National Opera's production of Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea*. This led to bigger roles in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, as Susanna in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, and in Handel's *Semele*, where she merrily stripped off as she skipped into the wings, consolidating her reputation as a cheeky, fun-loving party girl – 'The Soprano who Dares to Bare', as the headlines put it.

It wasn't, she insists, representative of her true nature. 'I'm not an extrovert person,' she says. 'I'm actually quite shy. But, if I see any sort of performance, even something I can't do, I want to be a part of it. I'm still being me on stage, but it's a different bit of me that I'd be too self-conscious to access just chilling out in the pub.'

As her thirties got into their stride, life became more settled for Sampson. She married and went to live with her husband in Germany. Then came children (a son, now aged 15, and a daughter, 12) and with them, the need to make some serious decisions. 'The reason I haven't done all that much opera was because I decided I didn't want to be away from home for months at a time. That wasn't an artistic choice; it was a life choice. It's worked for me but it's not for everyone. I'm



Music and maths

A beautiful symmetry

'People talk about the relationship between music and maths, and I wonder if that's to do with patterns.' As the daughter of maths teachers, Carolyn Sampson has the facility to absorb patterns in music which, she tells me, makes learning complex works fairly easy.

It's an ability she shows off to brilliant effect in Cheryl Frances-Hoad's *Something More than Mortal*, a centrepiece of *but I like to sing...*. The unaccompanied tour de force sets excerpts from letters between Ada Lovelace (pictured above) and Charles Babbage, two great 19th-century mathematicians. Lovelace's feverish words are rhythmic and repetitive but also passionate, embracing the nature of the infinite.

Music and maths seem to bring together the symmetry found in the logical left hemisphere of the brain and the more instinctual right side. And perhaps this explains Sampson's expressive ease in the music of Bach, that most mathematical of composers.

On the other hand, the singer is keen to point out that when she performed *Something More than Mortal* in a Wigmore Hall concert, she forgot her words and had to start again. The momentary lapse endeared her to her audience: 'It's good to be reminded that we're only human!'

GETTY

Letting her hair down: (left) performing in *Pelléas et Mélisande* for Scottish Opera, 2017; Sampson's 100th album, *but I like to sing...*

keen to tell young singers who are starting out that there are so many paths to a good career.'

At a time when gender equality has come to the fore, how supportive is the opera world for women who want a better life/work balance? 'Of course, it's amazing if you can have a crèche at an opera house – but that's still a luxury that most opera companies can't afford. However, there are simple steps that opera houses ought to take, like getting schedules out in advance so that you can plan childcare. The truth is, though, that once your kids are in school, it's very hard to juggle everything. But then, if you're expecting an easy path in life, don't chose singing as a career!'

With opera largely off the menu, Sampson focused on her thriving concert career and slowly built on her considerable strengths as a recitalist. She was in her forties when she made her first recital disc, *Fleurs*, with pianist Joseph Middleton, who has become a regular partner in the concert hall and on recordings (his virtuosic skills are much in evidence in *but I like to sing...*). Like many good friendships, theirs was forged over a drink in a pub. 'We chatted away (not just about music!) and it was an easy step to start working together. Joe suggested the flower theme – because there are so many songs about flowers in such a variety of languages and styles. We had great fun putting together a shortlist. We talked about colours, and about the poems. I'll often read out a poem before we perform the song for the first time, so we've got the overall shape of the piece in our heads and the music has an arc.'

The pair's next disc, *A Verlaine Songbook*, came a year later, exploring settings of 25 works by the iconic French Symbolist poet. It's a sensual, sensory world of light and colour which particularly suits Sampson's limpid, expressive singing, and it was fascinating to learn how she and Middleton assimilated the style. 'Oh, we really got into it! We read *Madame Bovary* and we went to the Wallace Collection to see Watteau's *Fêtes galantes*. Verlaine's poems were, of course, at the core, but the wider ideas and imagery that we absorbed really inform the way we presented the songs.'

Approaching 50, says Sampson, seems like a much bigger milestone than 40. Life has moved on. These days she lives as a single parent back in her home town of Bedford, near her mother and stepfather, though with her children still at the heart of everything. Meanwhile, her voice has certainly moved on from the treble-like purity of her Bach years, developing into something a little less tidy, showing its 'life experience' with a sprinkling of wisdom added to its natural wit. The light and radiance are still all there, however. Sampson has never been one for exploring the dark side: 'I have to make a conscious effort if I need to produce a dark or ugly sound,' she says. 'We have to embrace the instrument we are given, so I accept my natural brightness rather than longing for a mezzo-y richness.'

Opera has come into the mix again. A superb Mélisande in David McVicar's production of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* for Scottish Opera in 2017 showed Sampson heading for her operatic prime until Covid nipped that in the bud. She picked up the thread again last year when she made her triumphant debut at the Berlin Staatsoper in Charpentier's *Médée*, conducted by Simon Rattle.

The next steps are tantalising. 'If you are a woman turning 50, you know you're heading towards some serious changes in life. Singers talk about the voice "thickening" and becoming less agile through the menopause. I haven't noticed anything quite like that yet, but I'm finding that there's just a little more steel creeping into the tone. That's interesting because it gives me another dimension to play with. I was able to cut through an orchestra before, because of the focus in my voice, and now there's something that one reviewer referred to as "metallic" – and I want to know whether I'll be able to use this effectively in the future, maybe in Strauss and Mahler. On the other hand, I don't want to lose the warmth and the lightness, so I'll be treading carefully as I go. I still want to sing the songs I love.'

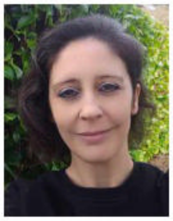
ENJOY
YOURSELF
ON A PREMIUM VALUE CRUISE
AMBASSADOR™
CRUISE LINE
THE BEST VALUE AT SEA
SAY HELLO AT
ambassadorcruiseline.com
Call 0808 102 8320
Discover our flagship, Ambience
BRONZE
BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 21/22
BEST CRUISE LINE FOR NO-FLY CRUISE HOLIDAYS
cruisecritic EDITORS' PICKS 2022
Best Value for Money (Ocean)
CRUISERS' CHOICE cruisecritic 2023
Best UK Mid-Size Cruises Overall
SILVER TRAVEL AWARDS 2023
WINNER
feefo 4.7/5
Service Rating 1,846 Reviews
ABTA
ABTA No. Y6765

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

FESTIVAL GUIDE 2024

COMPILED & WRITTEN: PAUL RILEY

Welcome!



It's that time of year again... Spring has finally sprung, and along with the promised sunshine we welcome a brand-new season of glorious summer music. This year, festivals around the world have pulled out all the stops to offer a wonderful range of repertoire, from the crowd-pleasing to the obscure, featuring an even more dazzling line-up of artists.

Among the highlights, the UK cathedrals of Norwich and Gloucester host atmospheric performances, while the US mountain ranges of Colorado and Idaho draw such top names as Yo-Yo Ma and Renée Fleming. Not to be outdone, the historic cities of Prague and Amsterdam each muster 50 pianos to stage Georg Friedrich Haas's *11,000 Saiten*. And not forgotten are this year's birthday boys – Holst, Puccini and Bruckner – who, from Granada to Matsumoto, receive due celebration. **Charlotte Smith** *Editor*

United Kingdom

Tectonics
Glasgow, 4, 5 May
tectonicsfestival.com
Anchored by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Tectonics returns to the Old Fruitmarket and City Halls at the start of a second decade of genre-bending brio. Co-curated by conductor Ilan Volkov and Alasdair Campbell, it throws down a gauntlet on behalf of the new, with an international line-up that includes Japanese experimental rock band leader Koichi Makigami, New York vocalist Ka Baird and the world premiere of a piece for orchestra and tape by Charles Uzor. Plus, violinist Ilya Gringolts gives the UK premieres of works by Sciarrino and Mirela Ivičevič.

Brighton Festival
Brighton, 4-26 May
brightonfestival.org
Multi-arts Brighton has invited writer Frank Cottrell-Boyce to be this year's guest director, and he's promising 'a cargo of wonders' ranging from an installation involving 100 miles of string to mass table tennis participation. Among the musical 'wonders', the LSO under Antonio Pappano venture Barber, Ravel and Rachmaninov; at Glyndebourne, harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani and members of Britten Sinfonia are immersed in Bach; and asking 'What's so great about opera?', mezzo Hilary Summers caps 'I'm a Puccini heroine addict' with a one-woman bite-sized version of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Norfolk and Norwich Festival
Norwich, 10-26 May
nnfestival.org.uk
Nothing quite says summer like the Chapelfield Gardens' Spiegeltent where, from Ragroof Tea Dance to South American circus, festival afficionados let their hair down. Chamber Choir Ireland and late-evening Messiaen colonise the city's Cathedral, while the medieval Guildhall screens specially commissioned films inspired by music. The Octagon Chapel, however, is not

KAJA SMITH, KAUPO KIKKAS, CHARLES CHIEJINA

Floating on air: Mahan Esfahani tackles Bach in Brighton; (below left) Francesca Chiejina sings Mahler in Chipping Campden; (left) Ema Nikolovska explores Virginia Woolf in Bath

to be outdone. As well as a BBC New Generation Artists' series, Apartment House introduces a new work by Cassandra Miller, and organists James McVinnie and Eliza McCarthy buckle up for the eight-hours duration of Jonny Greenwood's *268 Years of Reverb*.

Chipping Campden Festival

Chipping Campden, 11-25 May

campdenmayfestivals.co.uk

Founding artistic director Charlie Bennett stepped down after last year's festival, but his guiding spirit lives on. The Festival Academy Orchestra is at hand for Ravel from pianist Steven Osborne, and Strauss's sublime *Four Last Songs* sung by Sophie Bevan. Francesca Chiejina joins the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective for songs by Alma Mahler.

And among a fine crop of pianists making their way to St James's Church are Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Marc-André Hamelin and festival patron Paul Lewis.

Stamford International Music Festival

Stamford Arts Centre, 16-18 May

simfestival.com

Sharing its musical favours between the town's Georgian Arts Centre and imposing St Martin's Church, violinist Freya Goldmark's compact celebration of chamber music returns as wide-ranging as ever. A Bohemian thread stretches from Smetana in the first concert to Dvořák in the last; and as well as Janáček's *Pohádka* there's a re-imagining for string quartet and clarinet of his piano cycle *On an Overgrown Path*.

Bath Festival

Bath, 17-26 May

bathfestivals.org.uk

Party in the City has become something of a Bath speciality, and with over 20,000 attendees last year, it fires the starting gun on a festival that combines the erstwhile music and literary festivals. At the heart of this year's music programme is artist-in-residence Sean Shibe, whose questing guitar explores Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* with mezzo Ema Nikolovska, and dances Boccherini's Fandango in the company of the Carducci Quartet. Beneath the Abbey's glorious fan vaulting, Stile Antico revisits the Renaissance, while the Maxwell Quartet pair late Beethoven and Scottish folk music.

United Kingdom

Back to nature: Emma Johnson's Orchestra for the Environment is at Swaledale Festival

FRANCES MARSHALL

Sheffield Chamber Music Festival

Various venues, Sheffield, 17-25 May

musicintheround.co.uk

For its 40th anniversary, the festival invites cellist Steven Isserlis to be its guest curator; and given his Francophile leanings plus the Fauré centenary, Sheffield will be wearing its beret at a jaunty angle. Ensemble 360 and friends devote a day to Saint-Saëns, baritone Roderick Williams adds Fauré's *La bonne chanson* and Ravel to the mix, and those up with the lark should convene at 5am, when Barber and Messiaen greet the dawn at Samuel Worth Chapel.

Perth Arts Festival

Perth, 22 May – 1 June

perthfestival.co.uk

It's not just opera divas who like to change frock mid-concert. In their tercentenary mash-up of the *Four Seasons* lassoing Vivaldi, Richter and Piazzolla, Il Giardino d'Amore sport seasonal costume adjustments at every turn. Meanwhile, Scots Opera Project sets Mozart's *The Magic Flute* in an asylum, while Scottish Opera pop-ups propose 'A Little Bit of the Merry Widow' and 'A Little Bit of Don Giovanni'. The Hebrides Ensemble reforges the Auld Alliance, and the Czech National Orchestra bestrides Bruch and Beethoven.

English Music Festival

Dorchester-on-Thames, 24-27 May

englishmusicfestival.org.uk

And still they come! The English Music Festival continues its happy knack of ferreting out Vaughan Williams premieres: this time, opening night's unveiling is his concert fantasy *Richard II*. It is followed by Holst's 'Cotswolds' Symphony in a BBC Concert Orchestra evening that also heads east for Carwithen's *Suffolk Suite*. Her music also features in the closing concert, which falls to the English Symphony Orchestra.

Swaledale Festival

North Yorkshire, 25 May – 8 June

swalefest.org

With Swaledale, Wensleydale and Arkengarthdale supplying the backdrop, the festival is painted on a rugged canvas that uplifts before a note has sounded. Clarinettist Emma Johnson's Orchestra for the Environment includes her own Clarinet Concerto alongside Vaughan Williams, Puccini and Tchaikovsky; and among over 50 events, a rich harvest of string quartets (including the Brodskys and The Revolutionary Drawing Room) goes head-to-head with the four trombones of Bone-Afide. From Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* to dry stone walling, Swaledale seduces!

Nevill Holt Festival

Market Harborough, Leicestershire, 1-26 June

nevillholtopera.co.uk

A new year. A new festival. Sort of. Erstwhile Nevill Holt Opera has rebranded itself, though with its award-winning purpose-built opera house it has not quite abandoned the musical stage. Directed by Melly Still, Mozart's *The Magic Flute* launches Nevill Holt's reincarnation, and there's more than a whiff of magic to what follows. Tenor Nicky Spence and soprano Mary Bevan issue invitations to 'A most Marvellous Party'; late Brahms and Chopin absorb pianist Benjamin Grosvenor; and Britten Sinfonia premieres works by Benjamin Kwasi Burrell and Sergey Akhunov.

Summer Music in City Churches

London, 6-15 June

summermusiccitychurches.com

No need to feel cheated that the festival is restricting itself to just one church this summer. In St Giles Cripplegate, Oliver Cromwell was married, John Milton is buried, and William Shakespeare had lodgings nearby – remembered in this year's theme. The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra sets the scene with Finzi's Introduction to *Love's Labour's Lost*; the Fauré centenary is variously observed; and love is in the air as violinist David Juritz heads up the Curve Ensemble for Nuevo Tango.

Aldeburgh Festival

Snape Maltings and around, 7-23 June

brittenpearsarts.org

When EM Forster observed that a festival should be festive, distinctive and responsive to its setting, he had

NEWBURY
Spring
FESTIVAL
11-25 MAY
TWO WEEKS of WORLD-CLASS MUSIC
Over 45 spectacular events to choose from in Newbury and beyond.
HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:
LONDON MOZART PLAYERS
WITH ALLAN CLAYTON
VOCES8 | TENEBRAE | MANU BRAZO
ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
EMMA JOHNSON & THE ORCHESTRA FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
VADYM KHOLODENKO
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
KINSKY TRIO PRAGUE | TAKÁCS QUARTET
SAM JEWISON QUINTET
TAMSIN WALEY-COHEN & CORDELIA WILLIAMS
& MANY MORE!
newburyspringfestival.org.uk

BUDLEIGH
MUSIC
FESTIVAL
Classical Music on the Coast
Featuring Dame Sarah Connolly, Tenebrae, Benjamin Grosvenor, Ethan Loch, Seckou Keita, The Sacconi and Salomé Quartets, the BBC Big Band, Ryan Corbett and Bethany Partridge.
28TH JUNE TO 7TH JULY 2024
FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:
www.budleighmusicfestival.co.uk

STOUR
MUSIC
FESTIVAL of EARLY
MUSIC in EAST KENT
Fireworks Music (and fireworks)
Flamenco
Handel Orlando
The Alehouse Boys
Mary Bevan & Purcell's Playground
Hadyn's Vienna
21st-30th June 2024
Boughton Aluph Church
Box Office 0333 666 4466
www.stourmusic.org.uk

1984-2024 40 YEARS OF MUSIC IN THE ROUND
Sheffield
CHAMBER
MUSIC
Festival
17–25 May 2024
curated by
STEVEN ISSERLIS cello
with ENSEMBLE 360 and guests including
RODERICK WILLIAMS baritone
© Matthew Johnson 2024
www.musicintheround.co.uk

4-21 JULY 2024
BIF Buxton International Festival
A **summer celebration** of opera, music, books & jazz in the beautiful Peak District.
OPERA MUSIC BOOKS JAZZ
OPERA HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:
ERNANI VERDI, **IL TRIONFO DEL TEMPO E DEL DISINGANNO** HANDEL, **LA TRAGÉDIE DE CARMEN** PETER BROOK
MUSIC & JAZZ HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:
GOLDA SCHULTZ, JUDI JACKSON, **SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO**, VOCES8, **RODERICK WILLIAMS**, ADRIAN COX, **STILE ANTICO**, MADELINE BELL, **MICA MILLAR**, CARLOS ACOSTA
BOX OFFICE 01298 72190
BUXTONFESTIVAL.CO.UK
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

2024 BEVERLEY & EAST RIDING EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL
THREADS OF GOLD
24–26 MAY
Weaving together concerts, workshops and the music of Spain
Tenebrae | London Handel Players
The Telling | Bojan Čičić & Steven Devine
El Gran Teatro del Mundo | Ensemble Augelletti
BRITAIN'S PREMIER FESTIVAL OF EARLY MUSIC
2024 YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL
6 – 13 JULY
Metamorfosi
THE SIXTEEN | VOX LUMINIS | THE GESUALDO SIX
THE ORCHESTRA OF THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT
CUBAROQUE WITH ELIZABETH KENNY
Illuminating music from across the ages through concerts, workshops & illustrated talks
FULL DETAILS & TICKETS NCEM.CO.UK | 01904 658338
ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, WALMGATE, YORK YO1 9TL
NCEM THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR EARLY MUSIC
LOTTERY FUNDED
Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Aldeburgh in mind: 75 festivals on, Forster's vision and that of founders Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears remains vibrantly intact. Aldeburgh's landmark edition isn't the only anniversary celebrated; in majestic Blythburgh Church, 60 years after its premiere there, Britten's *Curlew River* is revisited. All told, 26 premieres – world and UK – underscore Aldeburgh's continuing commitment to the new. But the 'old' isn't sidelined, as Vox Luminis recreates the enchanted world of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*. 2024's featured composers are Unsuk Chin and Judith Weir, whose opera *Blond Eckbert* launches the festival in a new production by Robin Norton Hale.

Northern Aldborough Festival

Aldborough, N Yorks, 13-22 June

aldboroughfestival.co.uk

Not to be confused with its Suffolk close-sound-alike, Northern Aldborough also coincidentally boasts a performance of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, this one by the Armonico Consort. Orbiting St Andrew's Church, the festival will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in the company of violinist Viktoria Mullova, who mulls over Beethoven and Schubert with pianist Alasdair Beatson; and, with a jury including Sir John Tomlinson and Edward Gardner, a second iteration of the new Singing Voices Competition has an eye on vocal futures.

Stour Music

Boughton Aluph, Kent, 21-30 June

stourmusic.org.uk

There are fireworks visual and musical as I Fagiolini's director Robert Hollingworth continues his guardianship of the festival Alfred Deller founded over 60 years ago. Steven Devine conducts Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks* alongside the *Water Music* (just in case anything needs dousing!) And there's more Handel as Liberata Collective presents a staging of *Orlando* complete with Baroque gestures. The irrepressible Barokksolistene alongside soprano Mary Bevan are let loose in 'Purcell's Playground'; and, following an afternoon in Vienna wrapped around Haydn's *Wind Band Mass*, a Viennese-style tea in the marquee is serenaded by the period instruments of Boxwood and Brass.

A song and dance: Barokksolistene play at Stour Music

KNUT UTLER

Thaxted Festival

Thaxted, 21 June – 14 July

thaxtedfestival.co.uk

Gustav Holst took up residence in the picturesque Essex village on the eve of the First World War, and in his 150th birthday year, Thaxted is in celebratory mood. It opens with his *Fugal Concerto* No. 2; the Echo Ensemble salutes *The Planets* in words and music; meanwhile, Voces8 showcases some of the choral music alongside works by Caroline Shaw and Giovanni Croce. Composer-in-residence is Noah Max, and the premiere of his Symphony No. 1 comes courtesy of the London Mozart Players.

St Magnus Festival

Orkney, 21-28 June

stmagnusfestival.com

As the white nights of an Orcadian summer blend almost imperceptibly into day, the festival, in part instigated by Peter Maxwell Davies and Orkney poet George Mackay Brown, reaffirms its twin allegiance to the international and local. Swedish folk music and Bach from artists-in-residence Musica Vitae bounce off each other; O Duo and soprano Elizabeth Llewellyn undertake the UK premiere of George Crumb's percussion-rich *American Songbook II*; and in the ancient Kirkwall cathedral after whose saint the festival is named, Orff's atavistic *Carmina Burana* unites the Festival Chorus in song.

Proms at St Jude's

Hampstead Garden Suburb, London, 22-30 June

promsatstjudes.org.uk

From Tango to Tabakov, Motown to Mozart, NW11 is out to prove that South Kensington doesn't have the Proms all to itself. And as the festival enters its fourth decade, lunchtime and evening concerts collide with heritage walks and an al fresco family day welcoming the recycled instruments of the Junk Orchestra. Inside lofty St Jude's, the Fantasia Orchestra sizes up Uncle Sam; an expanded Kanneh-Mason Trio tickles Schubert's 'Trout'; and the Echo Ensemble slips Noah Max's *Axiom* into an otherwise all-Mozart programme.

East Neuk Festival

Fife, 26-30 June

eastneukfestival.com

As if the fishing villages and spectacular seascapes of the Fife coast weren't enough, come summer they greet a festival that can't help itself when it comes to pukka programming and an artist list to match. The Belcea Quartet proves that four into six *will* go – with invited friends such as cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras and pianist Bertrand ▶

United Kingdom

Chamayou to facilitate sextet Chausson and Brahms. Closing night in St Andrews brings together the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Arvo Pärt, Philip Glass and organist Tom Wilkinson.

Peasmarsh Chamber Music Festival

Peasmarsh, E Sussex, 27-30 June

peasmarshfestival.co.uk

The much-missed Florestan Piano Trio may no longer be with us but, presided over by the sometime trio's violinist and cellist, Anthony Marwood and Richard Lester, the Sussex festival it established flourishes still. Guests for 2024 include the Barbican Piano Quartet and Britten Sinfonia. Peasmarsh's Church of St Peter & St Paul hosts an eclectic programme spanning Byrd and Tallis to Elliott Carter and Valentin Silvestrov, while an excursion to Rye culminates in Beethoven's Symphony No. 1.

Penarth Chamber Music Festival

Penarth, South Wales, 27-30 June

penarthchambermusicfestival.org.uk

It all started with a sound check 10 years ago. And so was born a festival with a unique selling point: home is the Pavilion at the end of Penarth Pier. But not exclusively so in this special anniversary year – a Cardiff Gala features soprano Rebecca Evans and conductor Carlo Rizzi in the closing scene from Richard Strauss's *Capriccio* (cut down to size by David Matthews). A late-night sequel samples Poulenc, Ligeti and Britten; while the last day references Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon* and actor Sam West's Flat Holm Island Discs – played live by an ensemble led by festival directors, violinist David Adams and cellist Alice Neary.

JAM on the Marsh Festival

Romney Marsh, Kent, 4-14 July

jamconcert.org

In its more than 20 years of existence, JAM has premiered nearly 200 works, and as it returns to Romney Marsh, new music by John Frederick Hudson and Joseph Phibbs touches Kentish base. Tenor Mark Padmore makes his JAM debut during one of three concerts by the London Mozart Players. So too does Stephen Layton conducting the Holst Singers, and the class of 1934 teaches the chamber music strand a thing or two.

Buxton International Festival

Buxton, 4-21 July

buxtonfestival.co.uk

Go for the opera. Stay for chamber music, jazz, dance, or Pavilion Arts Centre's love affair with books. There's more to Buxton's allure than the opera productions that slip so seductively into Frank Matcham's intimate theatre. Peter Brook's pared-back Bizet *Carmen* heralds a new production of Verdi's *Ernani*, Handel and Haydn, plus Ethel Smyth's *Boatswain's Mate*, which puts to sea directed by Nick Bond. Stile Antico delivers a concert trilogy in a single day; the Sitkovetsky Trio also appears in triplicate; and Paul Lewis performs Schubert's last three piano sonatas.

Lichfield Festival

Lichfield, 4-14 July

lichfieldfestival.org

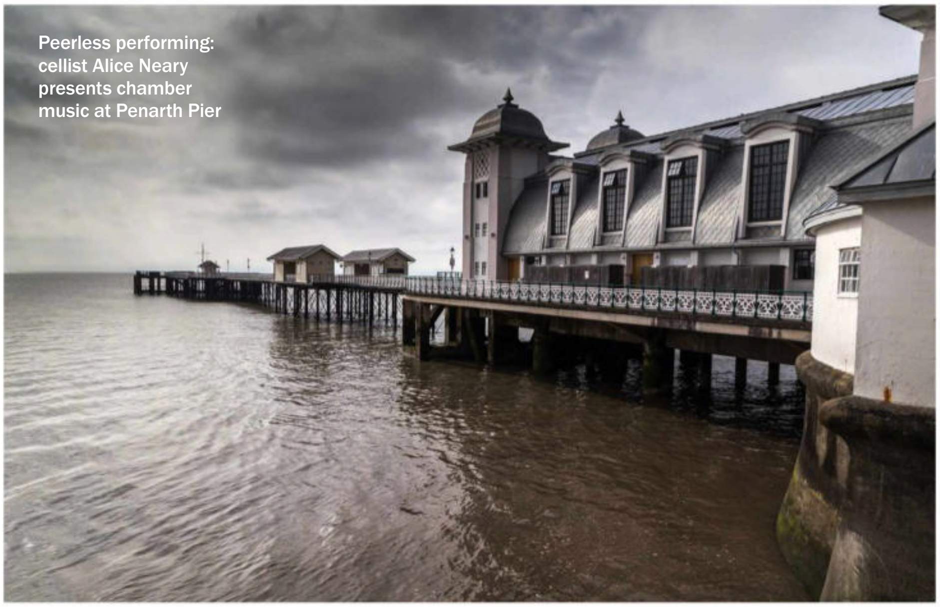
When it comes to associate artists, the festival in the city of Dr Johnson's birth can call on a veritable dictionary of in-post performers. Among them, the BBC National Symphony Orchestra of Wales remembers Holst 150 with *Egdon Heath*; the Brodskys traverse the complete Shostakovich string quartet cycle; and, in the medieval cathedral, pianist Danny Driver plays candlelit Bach.

Deal Festival

Deal, Kent, 4-14 July

dealmusicandarts.com

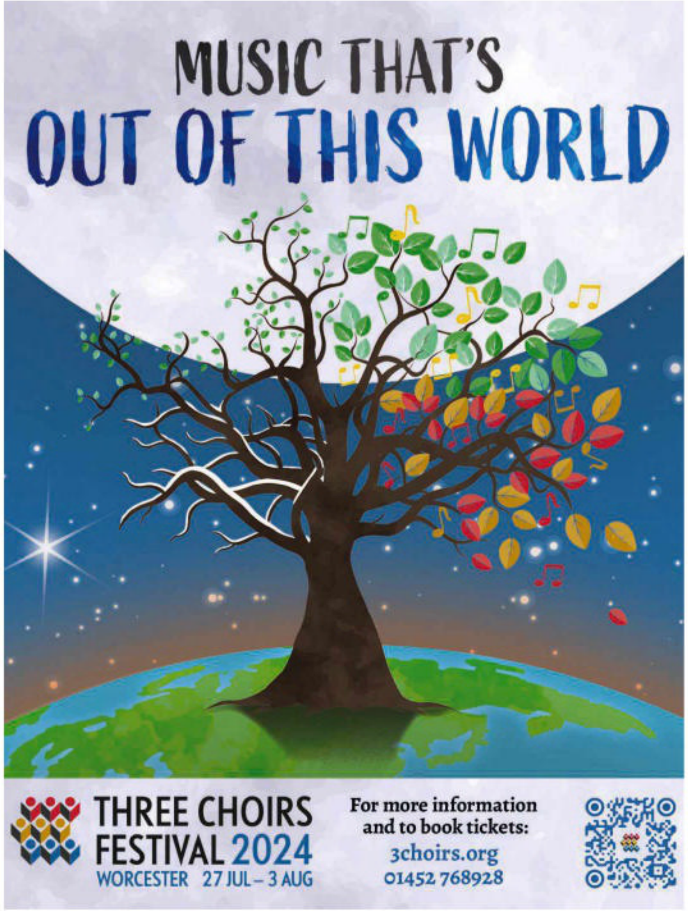
With responses to Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* by composers including Brian Elias and composer-in-residence Florence Anna Maunders spliced into Chamber Domaine's traversal of the complete set, Deal all but wraps up an edition charting French Connections in film and music. The theme is apt. From the pier, spotting boats ferrying cross-Channel connections every few minutes is inescapable! Soprano Lucy Crowe combines a little French *je ne sais quoi* with songs by Schubert and Handel, and the Fidelio Trio dons life jackets



Peerless performing: cellist Alice Neary presents chamber music at Penarth Pier

GETTY

MUSIC FESTIVAL
CHIPPING CAMPDEN
in the magnificent North Cotswolds
11TH - 25TH MAY 2024
Highlights Include
Elena Urioste
Stephen Osborne
Sophie Bevan
• Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
• Pierre-Laurent Aimard
• Paul Lewis
• Roderick Williams
• Takács Quartet with Marc-André Hamelin
• Gesualdo Six
plus many more
BOOK ONLINE AT
CAMPDENMAYFESTIVALS.CO.UK


MUSIC THAT'S
OUT OF THIS WORLD
THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL 2024
WORCESTER 27 JUL – 3 AUG
For more information and to book tickets:
3choirs.org
01452 768928

MOMA MACHYNLLETH
AWST 18-25 AUGUST 2024
The best in Classical, World & Welsh Music, Exhibitions & Talks in the heart of Wales
Gŵyl Machynlleth Festival
Y gorau o gerddoriaeth Glasurol, Cymru a'r Byd, Arddangosfeydd a Sgyrsiau yng nghalon Cymru
Book online
Book Now
Save up to £50 and get a reserved seat with the Festival Season Ticket. Individual concert tickets from £10.
Llŷr Williams plays Chopin ▪ Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective play Schubert's Trout Quintet
Poulenc's La Voix Humaine ▪ Bach by Candlelight ▪ Dame Felicity Lott ▪ Alice Zawadzki Trio
Marmen String Quartet ▪ Natalya Romaniw ▪ Julius Drake... plus more
machynllethfestival.co.uk

Remember - Remember
the 9-24th of November
Wimbledon International Music Festival
"One of the most distinguished Festivals in the UK"
Musical Opinion
"A MAJOR Player, as its roster attests"
Eve Standard
Pavel Haas Quartet
Ronnie Scott Jazz Ens
Michael Collins
Academy Choir
Armonico
Regents Opera
Steven Osborne
Brodsky Quartet
Philharmonia Orchestra
Lawrence Power
Christoph Prégardien
Prokofiev Concert Drama
Don Giovanni
Fairy Queen
wimf
BOX OFFICE OPENS
JUNE 20
wimbledonmusicfestival.co.uk

peasmarsh24
PEASMARSH CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL 27-30 JUNE 2024
Anthony Marwood / Richard Lester / Alasdair Beatson / Pablo Hernán Benedí
Chaeyoung Park / Eivind Ringstad / Barbican Quartet / Britten Sinfonia
Inspiring music in beautiful surroundings with concerts in Peasmarsh and Rye
BOX OFFICE 01797 253 178 or via our website www.peasmarshfestival.co.uk
East Sussex

CORBRIDGE CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
25-28 July
Gould Piano Trio
Robert Plane
With guests
JP Jofre
Claire Booth
Maja Horvat
Enno Senft
Simone van der Giessen
Edvard Pogossian
Juliette Bausor
James Lea
www.corbridgefestival.co.uk

MUSICFEST
ABERYSTWYTH 20-27/7/24
Un Byd - One World

BEAMINSTER FESTIVAL
BEAMINSTERFESTIVAL.COM
MUSIC
THEATRE
ART
LITERATURE
2024 June 17–30
TREORCHY MALE CHOIR
GUY JOHNSTON
Cello
MISHKA RUSHDIE MOMEN
Piano
BEN GOLDSCHEIDER
Horn
MATHILDE MILWIDSKY
Violin
TIM KLIPHUIS TRIO
MATILDA LLOYD
Trumpet
EMMA JOHNSON AND FRIENDS
Lizzie Ball
Photo: LezliRose

Best in their field: Consone Quartet are resident at Paxton House

MATTHEW JOHNSON

for Sally Beamish's ingenious piano trio reimagining of Debussy's *La Mer*.

York Early Music Festival

York, 6-13 July

ncem.co.uk

'Metamorfosi' is the motto for York's eight-day delve into the human voice – from medieval to Baroque and the South American beyond. Concerto Soave explores the vocal side of Frescobaldi; The Sixteen pursue parody in Lassus; the Gesualdo Six are on the trail of Josquin's legacy right up to a recent work by Indian-American composer Shruthi Rajasekar; and Vox Luminis seeks the sacred in Monteverdi. Florilegium, meanwhile, fetches up at the early-18th-century French Court, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment enjoys a convivial evening at Zimmermann's Leipzig coffee house.

Cheltenham Festival

Cheltenham, 6-13 July

cheltenhamfestivals.com

With the composer's birth house just a short stroll from the elegant Pittville Pump Room, the festival was never going to forget Holst 150. From a musical tour of Holst's Cheltenham to the *Hymn of Jesus* in Gloucester Cathedral and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in the Edwardian Town Hall, he's roundly fêted. Other composers apply. Sean Shibe introduces a new guitar concerto by Cassandra Miller, and he joins the now-trademark Mixtape melange alongside pianist Clare Hammond, the Chaos String Quartet and the choir of Merton College, Oxford. The Dunedin Consort traces the Scottish-Canadian diaspora, while the green-fingered Marian Consort takes a trowel to Spain's late-Renaissance choral horticulture.

Ryedale Festival

North Yorkshire, 12-28 July

ryedalefestival.com

The Castle Howard triple-decker concert has long been one of Ryedale's hot tickets, but this year the house's architecture comes in for special scrutiny in a new work by Sarah Frances Jenkins. Contemporary music flourishes, with UK and world premieres including a new string quartet from Julian Anderson and piano trios by Gabriel Prokofiev and Robert Zuidam. At Ampleforth Abbey, Tenebrae performs the Howells Requiem, the Royal Northern Sinfonia prove themselves single-minded Mozartians in seaside Scarborough, and artist-in-residence Fleur Barron fuses kabuki theatre with Schubert's *Winterreise* in her Spring Snow project.

BBC Proms

London, 19 July – 14 September

bbc.co.uk/proms

There was valedictory Mahler, Mozart in C minor and 'Orrible Opera' at last year's Proms. Anniversaries were observed, visiting orchestras welcomed, and sometimes forsaking sunny South Kensington, the moveable feast took to the road. The 2024 edition is announced on 25 April. Check the website for details.

Music at Paxton

Berwick-upon-Tweed, 19-28 July

musicatpaxton.co.uk

Palladian perfection meets bucolic bliss where Paxton House nestles high above the Tweed. And for ten days every summer in its marbled picture gallery, painting and music mingle. Artists-in-residence the Consone Quartet oblige with three concerts, the last swelling the quartet's numbers to accommodate the Scottish premiere of Gavin Bryars's *The Bridges of Königsberg*. There's a Bach walk with violinist Tamsin Waley-Cohen; Ensemble Hesperi takes a ramble through 18th-century London; and a veritable smörgåsbord of world musics collide with Corelli and Piazzolla as Kosmos nurtures diversity.

Summer at Snape

Snape Maltings, 26 July – 31 August

brittenpearsarts.org

Scarcely has The Maltings got its breath back after June's Aldeburgh extravaganza than Snape's freewheeling summer sequel arrives – trailing an eclectic musical mix, family-friendly frolics and a shout-out for the visual arts. Vilde Frang performs Elgar's Violin Concerto with the LSO under Antonio Pappano; the Gesualdo Six dispenses choice vocal music sacred and secular; and Gambian multi-instrumentalist-singer Sona Jobarteh joins those creating the soundtrack to a Suffolk summer.

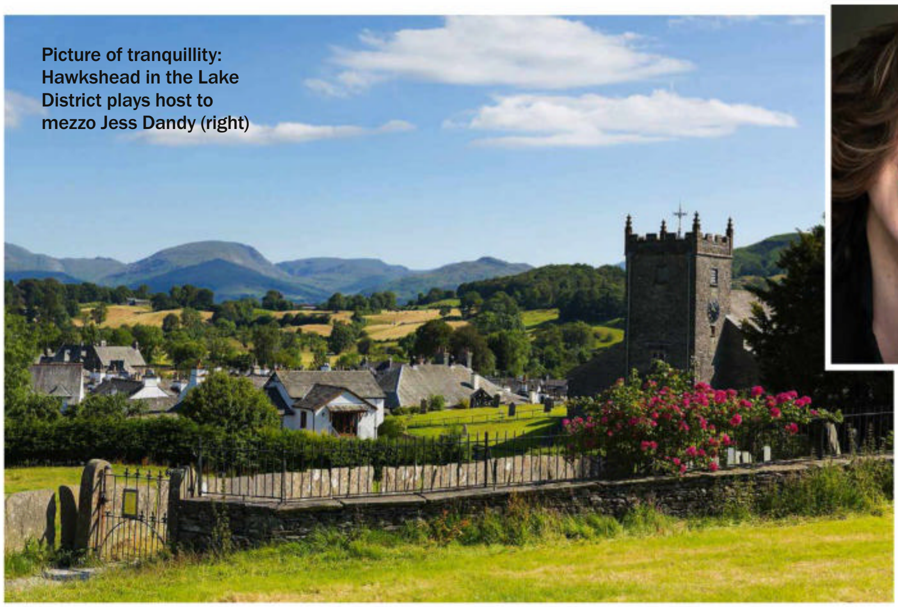
Lake District Summer Music

Cumbria, 26 July – 4 August

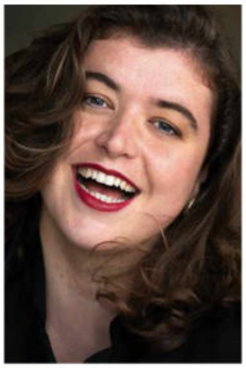
ldsm.org.uk

As Lake District Summer Music approaches its 40th edition, the natural world is beckoning. And, enveloped by glorious lakes and fells, the call is heeded. Part walk, workshop and informal concert, the Aurora Percussion Duo sounds the forest; and in Hawkshead, framed by Purcell, the Alkyona String Quartet and mezzo Jess Dandy trace the trajectory of 'Sunrise to Sunset'. Fretwork and soprano Ruby Hughes also favour

United Kingdom



Picture of tranquillity: Hawkshead in the Lake District plays host to mezzo Jess Dandy (right)



GETTY, CLARE PARK

Purcellian bookends; and on her farewell tour, pianist Kathryn Stott includes a new piece by Graham Fitkin.

Three Choirs Festival

Worcester, 27 July – 3 August

3choirs.org

Alternating between Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester, the Three Choirs Festival was something of a spiritual home for Holst. And in this anniversary year, both the *Hymn of Jesus* and *The Cloud Messenger* feature in a festival whose environmental theme also encompasses the Stanford centenary. Championing the UK premiere of Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Mass for the Endangered*, the Festival Chorus also keeps faith with Elgar's *The Kingdom*. Poulenc's *Figure humaine* falls to the BBC Singers, and the Three Cathedrals Choir gives the first performance of a new piece by Paul Mealor.

Edinburgh International Festival

Edinburgh, 2-25 August

eif.co.uk

Edinburgh 2023 asked, 'Where do we go from here?' Festival director Nicola Benedetti's latest edition supplies the answer: 'The Rituals that unite us'. It's a theme resonating across a programme that includes a three-concerts residency by the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, who preface Hans Rott's Symphony No. 1 with Bruckner and Mahler. And bolstering the orchestral big guns are the Philharmonia, whom Marin Alsop conducts in the UK premiere of Julia Wolfe's *Fire in my Mouth*. Among operatic stagings of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* and Komische Oper Berlin's *The Marriage of Figaro* there are concert performances of Strauss's *Capriccio* as well as Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. And in the spirit of unity and ritual, Orquesta La Pasión and musicians from the RSNO, the National Youth Choir of Scotland and Schola Cantorum de Venezuela come together for the Scottish premiere of Golijov's *La Pasión según San Marcos*.

Clandeboye Festival

Bangor, County Down, 17-24 August

camerata-ireland.com

Established by pianist Barry Douglas in response to the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, Camerata Ireland is celebrating its quarter-century this year – and celebrations are at the heart of the County Down festival Douglas and the Camerata founded two years later at aristocratic Clandeboye. The intimate Chapel and Banqueting Hall host some dozen concerts and recitals as well as providing a stimulating backdrop to the integral Festival Academy. Details of the 2024 edition are under wraps, but check the website for updates.

Machynlleth Festival

Y Tabernacl, Machynlleth, 18-24 August

moma.cymru

In Y Tabernacl, a former chapel turned gallery and arts centre, there's tragedy afoot as Argentinian soprano Mercedes Gancedo is the sole protagonist in Poulenc's piano-accompanied one-act opera *La voix humaine*. At the keyboard is the festival's co-director Julius Drake, and joining him in Machynlleth are fellow pianists Llyr Williams and, as part of Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective, Tom Poster. The Collective's programme might end with Schubert's 'Trout' Quintet, but en route there's a Divertimento by the splendidly-named Duchess Anna Amalia of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, as well as Mark Simpson's brooding *Nachtstück* for horn and piano.

Presteigne Festival

Presteigne, 22-26 August

presteignefestival.com

Not every festival cleaves to the observance of anniversaries. Independent-minded Presteigne is backing Britten with an astute selection of some of his less well-known works. And having always made a point of approaching new music with ears wide open, it conjures 12 premieres including a piano quintet from Michael Zev Gordon, Richard Blackford's *Spirit of Delight* and, in a finale that concludes with the young Britten's ebullient Sinfonietta Op. 1, a Harp Concerto by Lynne Plowman.

Lammermuir Festival

East Lothian, 5-15 September

lammermuirfestival.co.uk

After Creative Scotland's shock decision to remove funding from the festival, Lammermuir might be down, but it's far from out. Even under threat, the programming has lost none of its flair and cogency. A four-concerts residency brings Concerto Copenhagen to Scotland for the first time; and pianist Jeremy Denk is similarly 'resident', honouring the Fauré centenary with the Valo Quartet and tackling the complete Ives violin sonatas with Maria Włoszczowska. Completist Lammermuir also secures all the Beethoven piano trios from the Van Baerle Trio.

KINGS PLACE
"the finest chamber acoustic in London"
The Spectator
CHOIRS
Sun 2 Jun
The Carice Singers: Towards the Light
Kaija Saariaho Memorial Concert
Fri 18 Oct
The Marian Consort
Scottish Renaissance Polyphony
ORCHESTRAL
Thu 27 Jun
Musica Vitae play Bach, Oswald & Maxwell Davies
St Magnus International Festival celebration
Sat 28 Sep
Aurora Orchestra with Donald Grant
Traditional and contemporary music evoking winter in the Scottish Highlands
CHAMBER
Wed 5 Jun
Chiaroscuro Quartet
Beethoven Razumovsky 2&3
Wed 18 Sep
Danielle de Niese & Matthew Fletcher
Handel, Gershwin, Cole Porter
CONTEMPORARY
Sun 29 Sep
Louise McMonagle: Ancient Modernity
Solo cello spatialised in d&b Soundscape Incl. music byAnna Meredith and Caroline Shaw
Fri 25 Oct
Dunedin Consort & Hebrides Ensemble
James MacMillan's Since it was the day of Preparation...
"...truly seemed to herald beguiling new opportunities for ways of experiencing classical music. A triumph for Kings Place"
Arts Desk
Photo: Aurorora Orchestra © Viktor Erik Emanuel
Book tickets at kingsplace.co.uk
90 York Way, King's Cross, London N1
The cultural pulse of King's Cross

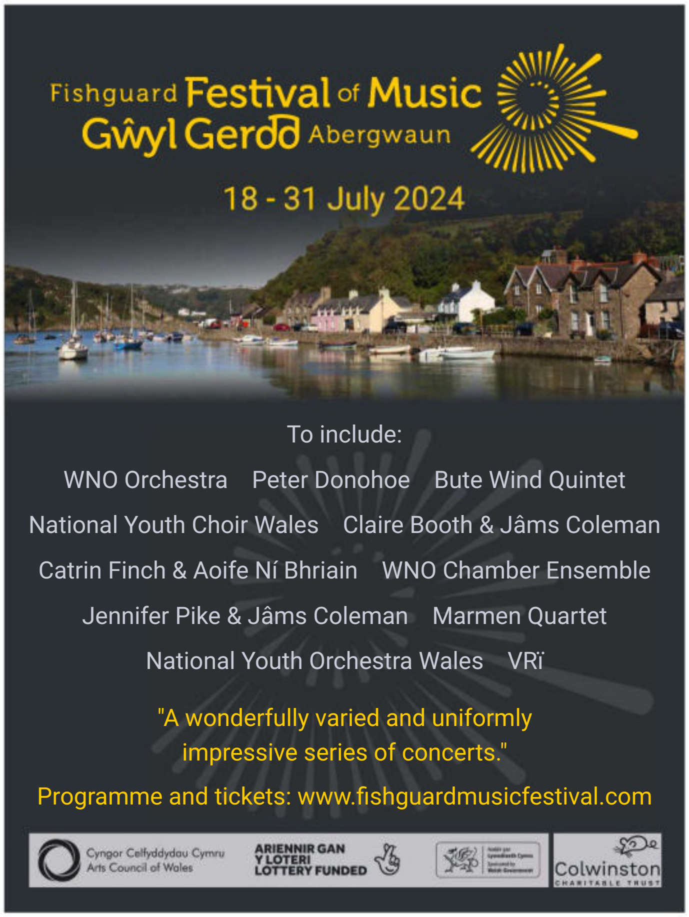
COWBRIDGE
MUSIC FESTIVAL
13th-22nd September 2024
Artists include:
Ailish Tynan
Llŷr Williams
Castalian Quartet
Rosalind Ventris
Pedair
Acoustic Triangle
Eädyth
www.cowbridgemusicfestival.co.uk

PRESTEIGNE
FESTIVAL
GŴYL
LLANANDRAS
22–26 AUGUST
22–26 AWST
2024
12 world premieres
Composer-in-residence
Richard Blackford
Artists
Piatti Quartet · Alice Neary · Huw Watkins
Anne Denholm · Annie Yim · Rebecca Bottone
Daniel Shao · Sarah Gabriel · Paul Galbraith
Rebecca Afonwy-Jones · Nicholas Mogg
Joseph Tong · Choir of Royal Holloway
Festival Orchestra and Ensemble
Full programme available online from late April
01544 267800 | presteignefestival.com

LAKE DISTRICT
MUSIC
SUMMER FESTIVAL
26 JULY - 4 AUGUST 2024
BOOK YOUR ESCAPE
TO THE LAKE DISTRICT
CONCERTS - WALKS
MASTERCLASSES
FAMILY EVENTS
ART & MORE
WWW.LDSM.ORG.UK

LM
YEAR OF
CZECH
MUSIC
2024
Leamington
Music
Festival
2–6 May 2024
Royal Pump Rooms | Leamington Spa
Celebrating Smetana at 200 and The Dvořák Society at 50
plus another 16 composers born in Czech Lands and performed by
Guarneri Piano Trio Martinů and Kukal String Quartets
Ben Goldscheider Iain Farrington
Philippe Graffin Oliver Hancock Martin Kasík
Piers Lane Gemma Rosefield Richard Uttley
Vilém Veverka Elizabeth Wallfisch Raphael Wallfisch
Simon Wallfisch Imogen Whitehead
See full details and book now on
www.leamingtonmusic.org or call 01926 334418

CHILTERN
ARTS FESTIVAL
10TH–17TH MAY 2024
Human Stories
HENLEY, THE RISBOROUGHS, HUGHENDEN & MARLOW
CARDUCCI STRING QUARTET • FENELLA HUMPHREYS
JAMES RUNCIE • I FAGIOLINI • ROGER MCGOUGH •
THE GESUALDO SIX • ANTON LESSER
FILM • WOODLAND WALK • POETRY & TALKS
PLUS
NEW! FESTIVAL PASSES: 20% OFF
WITH A HENLEY OR RISBOROUGH PASS
Tickets & info at chilternarts.com


Fishguard Festival of Music
Gŵyl Gerdd Abergwaun
18 - 31 July 2024
To include:
WNO Orchestra
Peter Donohoe
Bute Wind Quintet
National Youth Choir Wales
Claire Booth & Jâms Coleman
Catrin Finch & Aoife Ní Bhriain
WNO Chamber Ensemble
Jennifer Pike & Jâms Coleman
Marmen Quartet
National Youth Orchestra Wales
VRï
"A wonderfully varied and uniformly impressive series of concerts."
Programme and tickets: www.fishguardmusicfestival.com
Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru Arts Council of Wales
ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI LOTTERY FUNDED
Colwinston

50
THE DORSET OPERA
FESTIVAL
FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY YEAR
1974–2024
Finalist in the 2023 International Opera Awards
The home of Country House opera in South West England featuring renowned soloists, a full orchestra and a large chorus of emerging young artists
Marquee Bar | Picnics | Formal Dining
World Première
UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE
An opera in four seasons
Composer: Paul Carr
Librettist: Euan Tait (After Thomas Hardy)
23, 25 July at 19.00 | 27 July at 14.00
Marking 100 years since the composer's death...
MADAMA BUTTERFLY
Giacomo Puccini
22, 24, 27 July at 19.00 | 25 July at 14.00
The Golden Anniversary
GALA CONCERT
Friday 26 July at 19:00
Coade Theatre, Bryanston, Blandford Forum
Box Office: dorsetopera.com
07570 366 186
The social highlight of Dorset's summer...

UK Summer Opera

Picture perfect: audience members at Opera Holland Park soak up the atmosphere

Glyndebourne

Lewes, Sussex, 16 May – 25 August

glyndebourne.com

There's more to Glyndebourne than black-tie picnics on the lawn and bosky evenings of operatic opulence: last December's One Voice Festival of Singing convened some 2,000 schoolchildren; Glyndebourne Sinfonia and Chorus toured over 130 Sussex care homes; and a freshly configured autumn season juggled opera, recitals, masterclasses and concerts. Still, there's no denying that the summer festival is at the heart of the Glyndebourne experience – and has been for 90 years (see p14). Five productions gild 2024, with Bizet's *Carmen* opening the season in a new staging by Diane Paulus conducted by Robin Ticciati. The other new production, a house 'first', is Lehár's *The Merry Widow*, spearheaded by Danielle de Niese as the widow. Among the revivals is a tercentenary nod to Handel's *Giulio Cesare* (seasoned with a sprinkling of Bollywood, no less); and Nikolaus Lehnhoff's veteran production of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, which unites Miina-Liisa Värelä and Stuart Skelton as the ill-starred lovers.

Opera Holland Park

London, 28 May – 10 August

operahollandpark.com

Cue persecution, murder... and battlements! Italophile Opera Holland Park was never going to pass up marking the centenary of Puccini's death, and it opens with *Tosca* (Amanda Echalaz in the title role). But OHP is also noted for following the path less travelled and obliges with three semi-staged performances of Puccini's early 'dramma lirico' *Edgar*, featuring Peter Auty as the conflicted knight. Add in a close shave with Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* plus a Wolf-Ferrari/Leoncavallo double bill, and Italian hegemony is assured. But not without contest – Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Yeomen of the Guard* stand their ground with pomp, circumstance and pastoralism.

Garsington Opera

Wormsley Estate, Buckinghamshire, 29 May – 31 July

garsingtonopera.org

With the handsome new studio complex up and running, Garsington has a smile on its face this summer. There's roller-coaster comedy from Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* plus spells and enchantment as Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* works its magic. Space travel beckons courtesy of a new community opera by Andrew Norman, but *A Trip to the Moon* isn't the only novelty. Directed by Paul Agnew, the Garsington debut of Rameau's sumptuous extravaganza *Platée* returns The English Concert to bucolic Bucks and, postponed during lockdown, Verdi's early comedy *Un Giorno di Regno* finally claims its belated crown in a new production by Christopher Alden.

Grange Park Opera

West Horsley Place, Surrey, 6 June – 14 July

grangeparkopera.co.uk

Grange Park Opera's purpose-built theatre-in-the-woods is the opera house that refuses to sit still – in prospect are two new panoramic roof terraces and a treetop studio. Anchored by Bryn Terfel, Rachmaninov and Puccini kickstart the new season as Stephen Medcalf stages *Aleko* and *Gianni Schicchi*. They're conducted by Stephen Barlow, who also shoulders Janáček's harrowing *Kát'a Kabanová*. Donizetti's *Daughter of the Regiment*, meanwhile, enlists Nico Darmanin to brave its notorious salvo of top 'C's while, following 2021's premiere of *The Life and Death of Alexander Litvinenko*, Grange Park once again champions Anthony Bolton as it unveils his Tempest-based opera *Island of Dreams*.

Into the woods: Grange Park Opera's theatre among the trees

The Grange Festival

Alresford, Hampshire, 6 June – 6 July

thegrangefestival.co.uk

To describe the splendid neo-classical Grange as a 'roofed ruin' sells it short. For some two decades, an award-winning theatre has repurposed the Orangery, and not one but two opera series have taken root in halcyon Hampshire. The second incarnation, Grange Festival, is masterminded by countertenor Michael Chance who adds jazz and dance to a predominantly operatic mix. Scheming passion and madness inform a 2024 edition orbiting Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Puccini's *Tosca* and Stravinsky's Hogarth-inspired *The Rake's Progress*.

Longborough Festival Opera

Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, 16 June – 6 August

lfo.org.uk

Leafy Longborough's operatic adventures start a little later this summer. Perhaps the company is keeping its powder dry because, five years in the forging, three complete cycles of Wagner's *Ring* beckon – directed by Amy Lane and conducted by Anthony Negus. An enterprising Wagnerian 'fringe' is wrapped around the season engaging the likes of Simon Callow, John Tomlinson and Susan Bullock, and there's also just enough room to accommodate the Puccini centenary, as Alice Farnham conducts six performances of *La bohème*.

Bampton Classical Opera

Bampton, Oxfordshire, 19 July – 13 September

bamptonopera.org

Giovanni Gazzaniga anyone? Bampton regulars might remember his *Don Giovanni* – twice staged by the Oxfordshire-based company. This year it rehabilitates *L'isola d'Alcina*, composed some four decades after Handel's more familiar take on Ariosto's tale, and probably unseen in the UK since 1777. Sung in English, Jeremy Gray's production also visits Westonbirt, Wadhurst and London (St John's Smith Square). By way of curtain-up, Haydn's *The Apothecary* dispenses sizzling comedy in Dorchester-on-Thames (6 May).

Dorset Opera Festival

Bryanston, Dorset, 22-28 July

dorsetopera.com

Cheerfully acknowledging a landmark 50th-birthday season, the renowned summer school celebrates with something that speaks to its native soil: a specially commissioned operatic treatment of Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree*. With music by Paul Carr, and conducted by Jeremy Carnall, it's interleaved with Puccini's *Madam Butterfly* and an anniversary gala concert.

Waterperry Opera

Waterperry House, Oxfordshire, 9-18 August

waterperryoperafestival.co.uk

What with alfresco performances of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, serenades by Mozart and Fanny Mendelssohn in the ornamental garden and Jonathan Dove's song cycle *Nights Not Spent Alone* staged in Waterperry House's elegant ballroom, the festival maintains its reputation for eye-catching programming. Gracing the amphitheatre for 2024 is Britten's chilling *The Turn of the Screw* while, indoors, Charlotte Corderoy conducts John Wilkie's new staging of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

IF Opera

Belcombe Court, Bradford-on-Avon, 23-31 August

ifopera.com

Based on the runaway success of Walter Scott's novel, mental fragility, feuding and a celebrated mad scene are the hallmarks of Donizetti's 1835 *Lucia di Lammermoor*. As IF Opera animates a Wiltshire high summer, it's paired with a deliciously bittersweet contrast: Johann Strauss II's irresistible Viennese-whipped-cream-comedy *Die Fledermaus*. Off-piste, Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes* and the venerable Picnic Prom colonise Belcombe's delectable gardens.

ALI WRIGHT, FINTAN O'CONNOR

BH Live, Fairfield Halls & IMG Artists present

Czech National Symphony Orchestra

THURSDAY 16 MAY 2024

Conductor: *Steven Mercurio*
Soloist: *Chloe Hanslip (Violin)*

Smetana - Moldau
Bruch - Violin Concerto
Dvorak - Symphony No. 8

CNSO

FAIRFIELD HALLS

fairfield.co.uk

THAXTED FESTIVAL
• EST 1916 •

Nadine Benjamin, soprano. Image © Teresa Elwes

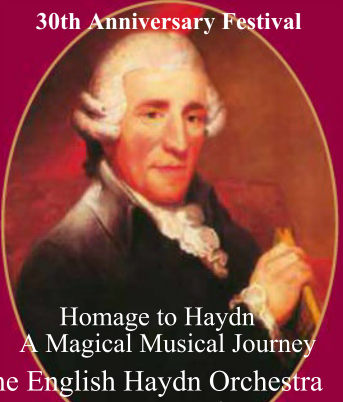
21 June to
14 July 2024

A summer of concerts
in Thaxted, Essex

Full programme online:
thaxtedfestival.co.uk

ENGLISH HAYDN FESTIVAL

30th Anniversary Festival



Homage to Haydn
A Magical Musical Journey
The English Haydn Orchestra
Conductor: Steven Devine

BRIDGNORTH SHROPSHIRE

12 JUNE-15 JUNE 2024

www.englishhaydn.com

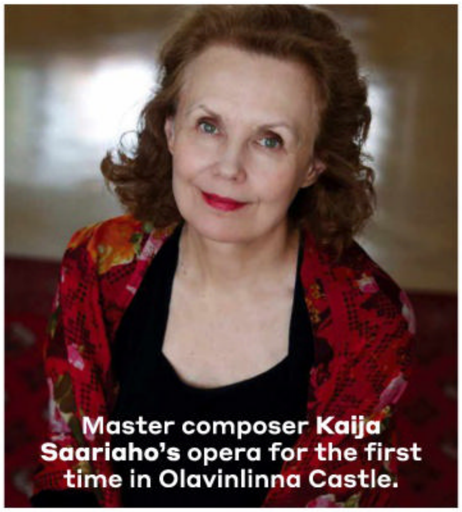
www.ticketsource.co.uk/haydn-festival-trust

ENGLISH HAYDN ORCHESTRA
(on period instruments)
Conductor: **Steven Devine**
Soloists:
Jennifer Pike - *violin*
Steven Devine - *fortepiano*
Simon Standage - *violin*
Pavel Serbin - *violoncello*
Emily Worthington-*clarinet*
Robert Percival - *bassoon*

Ensembles:
English Haydn Piano Trio
Revolutionary Wind Band
The Consone Quartet
The Salomon Quartet

Festival highlights:
Wed: **12th June.**
Haydn: Opera Arias
Thurs: **13th June.**
The Consone Quartet
Friday: **14th June:**
Schubert: Octet in F
JC Bach: Cello/Violin
Saturday: **15th June.**
Haydn: Piano Trios
Weber: Clarinet Concerto
Mozart: Violin Concerto
Haydn: String Quartets
Haydn: Symphonies:

On-Line Ticket Sales
www.ticketsource.co.uk
Further Details Telephone:
07547 289704
or Visit the website:
www.englishhaydn.com


Master composer **Kaija Saariaho's** opera for the first time in Olavinlinna Castle.

Karita Mattila in Wagner's Lohengrin and in the Grand Opera Concert with Prague National Theatre.

Mika Kares' role debut as Zaccaria in Nabucco, known for its great chorus scenes.

Europe

Change and transformation: Jan Vogler explores new horizons in Dresden; (right) Maria João Pires is part of Istanbul's cultural mix

Dresden Festival

Dresden, Germany, 9 May – 9 June

musikfestspiele.com

Dresden is pondering the theme of 'Horizons': cellist and artistic director Jan Vogler believes that the perception of classical music is changing, ushering in transformation. Over 60 events colonise some 21 venues for a festival bookended by the Royal Amsterdam Concertgebouw and the Czech Philharmonic. Conducted by Kent Nagano, the ongoing period instrument Wagner *Ring* cycle reaches *Die Walküre*; from Bach's B minor Mass to electro-pop duo Ätna, Dresden's own cultural hinterland is explored; and in the German Museum of Hygiene violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja dusts down Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*.

Ravenna Festival

Ravenna, Italy, 11 May – 9 July

ravennafestival.org

Last year's catastrophic flooding in the Emilia Romagna region has left Ravenna '24 reflecting on climate change, sustainability and the healing power of creativity. Screenings of Philip Glass's *Qatsi Trilogy* exploring man's impact on the natural world are accompanied by his live ensemble; and amid the mosaic splendours of the Basilica of Sant' Apollinare, Haydn's *The Creation* exercises Accademia Bizantina. In San Vitale the Marian Consort salutes Vicente Lusitano, and the Irini Ensemble delivers Dufay. Riccardo Muti and the Vienna Philharmonic set the ball rolling, while November's operatic postscript is devoted to Monteverdi and Purcell.

Prague Spring Festival

Prague, Czech Republic, 12 May – 3 June

festival.cz/en

For history afficionados, 'Prague Spring' refers to the protests of 1968. For music lovers, however, what first 'springs' to mind is a prestigious festival with an International Competition attached. Tradition and innovation go hand in hand, and nothing is more traditional than the opening concerts of Smetana's *Má Vlast* – this year awarded to the Berlin Philharmonic and its chief conductor Kirill Petrenko. Klangforum Wien is in residence and musters 50 pianos (and pianists!) for Georg Friedrich Hass's epic *11,000 Saiten*; Ton Koopman conducts Bach; and Collegium Vocale Gent look back to late-16th-century Italy.

Istanbul Music Festival

Istanbul, Turkey, 21 May – 12 June

muzik.iksv.org

'East meets West' is more than just a geographical reality in Istanbul. For over half a century, its festival has been facilitating close encounters of a cultural kind. The encounters also exist through time. Club culture invades a Classical Disco Night, while for those disinclined to throw some shapes there's more traditional fare from the Budapest Festival Orchestra, Festival Strings Lucerne with pianist Maria João Pire, and a homegrown performance of Mozart's Requiem coupled with Arvo Pärt. At the Grand Bazaar's Kürkçüler Gate, sacred music of the Jewish, Greek Orthodox and Armenian traditions probes Istanbul's musical roots.

Bergen International Festival

Bergen, Norway, 22 May – 5 June

fib.no

Edvard Grieg was instrumental in nurturing what subsequently developed into the Bergen Festival, and it hasn't forgotten him. An annual performance of his Piano Concerto is de rigueur, as are signature concerts at the composer's house, Troldhaugen. And in the city's Grieghallen, this year chief conductor Edward Gardner takes his leave of the Bergen Philharmonic with Mahler's mighty Eighth Symphony. The JACK Quartet champions composer-in-residence Øyvind Torvund, and the centenary of Luigi Nono's birth doesn't go unnoticed. Trio Mediaeval, meanwhile, pairs music from the early-15th-century Old Hall manuscript with modern works.

Blackwater Opera Festival

Lismore, Ireland, 27 May – 3 June

blackwatervalleyoperafestival.com

Since 2010 Wexford has not been the only Irish opera festival in town. Bestowing its favours between the grounds of Lismore Castle, a restored farmstead on the banks of the river Blackwater, and various venues including St Carthage's Cathedral, Blackwater is going from strength to operatic strength. Marking the tercentenary of its first performance, Nicholas McGegan conducts Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, and he also leads the Irish Baroque Orchestra in a Vivaldian Festival Finale. One hundred years after his death, composer Charles Villiers Stanford is reassessed in the country of his birth.

MARCO GROB, FELIX BROEDE, GETTY

Holland Festival

Amsterdam, Netherlands, 6-29 June

hollandfestival.nl

Holland '24 likes to think big. Not content with the 50 pianos required by Georg Friedrich Hass's *11,000 Saiten, Bird of a Thousand Voices* intrigues composer Tigran Hamasyan. Brazilian Christiane Jatahy is this year's associate director and re-envisions Shakespeare's *The Tempest*; Wu Tsang brings a hybrid slant to Bizet's *Carmen*, enlisting video, choreography and additional music by Andrew Yee; and Philip Venables's *The Faggots and their Friends between Revolutions* straddles all-night raves and lute song.

Bachfest Leipzig

Leipzig, Germany, 7-16 June

bachfestleipzig.de

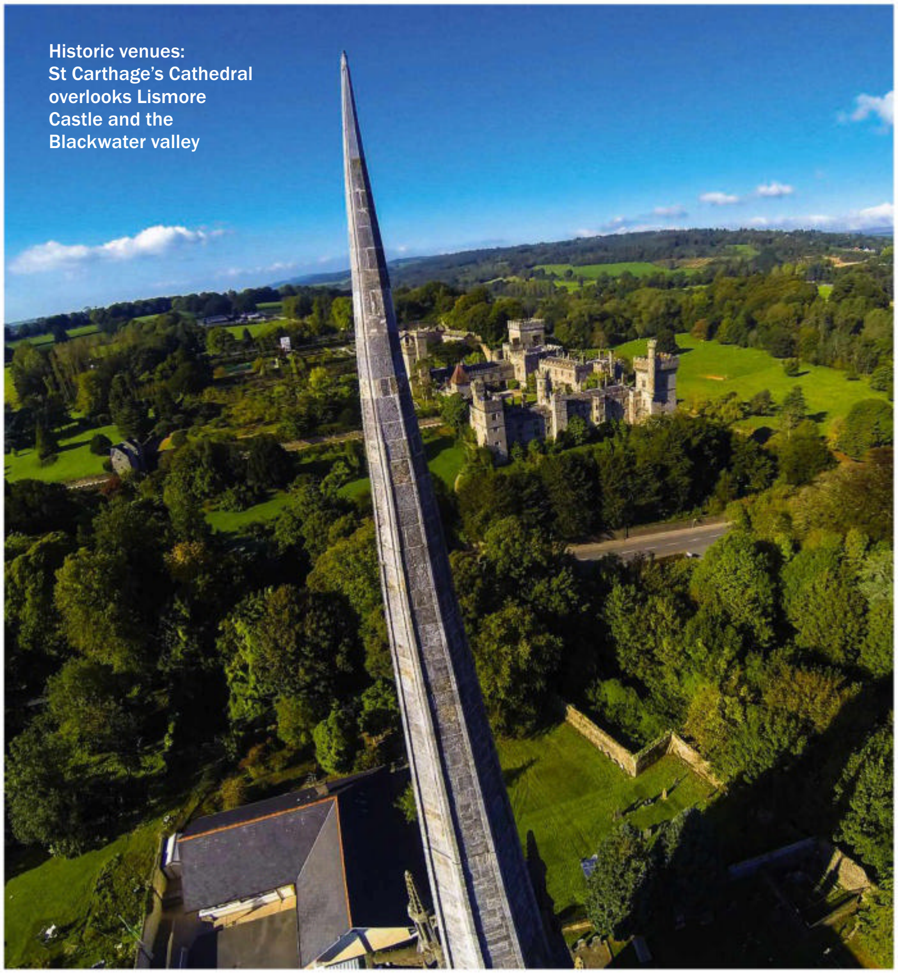
There might be 16 concerts given over to the chorale-cantatas, a closing traversal of the B minor Mass by Collegium Vocale Gent and the complete solo violin Sonatas and Partitas from Leonidas Kavakos, but in a busy ten days of Bachiana numbering over 150 events, not everything is resolutely brow-furrowing. In the Market Place, Bach goes Big Band, while the Babylon Orchestra fuses music from the middle east, jazz... and Bach. His penchant for wine and coffee is imbibed, and a Bach Forest of 129,000 trees is planned to mitigate the festival's ecological footprint.

Granada Festival

Granada, Spain, 7 June – 14 July

granadafestival.org

With a roster of visiting orchestras including the Vienna Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris and Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra, it's not only Granada's architecture that is distinctly 'Moorish'. Talent closer to home isn't forgotten either. Among the leading Spanish ensembles represented are Jordi Savall's Le Concert des Nations and Orquesta Nacionales de España. Austria has caught the festival's attention, and large-scale ▶



Historic venues: St Carthage's Cathedral overlooks Lismore Castle and the Blackwater valley

MUSIC HOLIDAYS

FOR DISCERNING TRAVELLERS

Kirker's programme of Exclusive Music Festivals features private recitals by world-class musicians in unique settings. Highlights this summer include string quartets and chamber musicians, as well as a very special baroque music festival in Suffolk and the Joe Stilgoe Jazz Trio in London.

LA SERENISSIMA

Baroque Music at Hintlesham Hall

A FOUR NIGHT HOLIDAY | 22 JULY 2024

The award-winning baroque music ensemble La Serenissima present a unique festival this summer in the elegant surroundings of Hintlesham Hall, which brings together the music and history of England, Vienna and Venice in the early 18th century. We will enjoy three private concerts, including Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* in its entirety, as well as enjoying the landscape of Suffolk which inspired Constable and Gainsborough, whose house we will visit.

Price from £2,196 (single supp. £320) which includes four dinners and three concerts

© Lia Vittone

THE KIRKER JAZZ FESTIVAL

with the Joe Stilgoe Trio

A THREE NIGHT HOLIDAY | 5 AUGUST 2024

Singer, pianist and songwriter, Joe Stilgoe brings his uniquely entertaining style of performance to three private concerts held at the Royal Over-Seas League in St James's: 'Songs on Film', 'Cole Porter meets Noël Coward' and 'The Art of the Love Song'. In addition to the concerts we will dine each evening at the hotel with Joe and his band, and during the day we visit the recently reopened National Portrait Gallery, which is once again one of London's finest museums, and the new Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy – an invariable source of innovative and controversial new work.

Price from £1,598 (single supp. £297) which includes three dinners and three concerts

Prices are per person based on two people sharing and include accommodation with breakfast and meals as described.

Speak to an expert:
020 7593 2284
kirkerholidays.com

ABTA ABTA No.V0030 AITO Kirker FOR DISCERNING TRAVELLERS

Jet-setting pianist: Martha Argerich appears at festivals in Ljubljana and Granada

GETTY

Bruckner plus intimate Schubert inform a programme that summons pianists Martha Argerich, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Paul Lewis and András Schiff, not to mention cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras

Festival O/Modernt

Stockholm Sweden, 14-16 June

omodernt.com

Its winter festival safely navigated, violinist Hugo Ticciati and his enterprising ensemble can turn their attention to summer's festival focus, which this year examines 'Schubert and the Sound of Memory'. For Ticciati, Schubert is a composer whose 'profoundly avant-garde spirit is charged with remembrance of things past'. And past meets present when the 'Trout' Quintet and troubled F minor Fantasie D940 rub shoulders with Max Richter, Dobrinka Tabakova and Pink Floyd.

Festival Ljubljana

Ljubljana, Slovenia, 20 June – 3 September

ljubljanafestival.si

With *Tosca* and *La bohème* tugging at the heart strings, the Slovenian capital's summer festival has the Puccini centenary covered. And Verdi's *Il trovatore* secures an Italian operatic hat trick. But opera is only a part of Ljubljana's eclectic offering, which spans a Wrocław Baroque Ensemble evening devoted to the 17th-century composer Kasper Förster and a Frank Zappa Day curated by Ensemble Dissonance. Antonio Pappano conducts two concerts with the LSO; Riccardo Chailly returns at the head of his La Scala orchestra; and the Slovenian Philharmonic brings down the final curtain, with Martha Argerich in Ravel's G major Piano Concerto.

Munich Opera Festival

Munich, Germany, 28 June – 31 July

staatsoper.de

It's quite a statement to open an opera festival with Ligeti's notorious 'anti-anti-opera' *Le Grand Macabre*, but for nigh-on a century Munich has not been afraid to turn heads. It's conducted by Kent Nagano who passes the baton to Hannu Lintu for the season's other new production: Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. All loved-up, 'Between Caritas and Ecstasy' is the title of a spotlight on love in the works of Wagner and Puccini. Five chamber concerts, meanwhile, include a celebration of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and some half-dozen song recitals feature, among others, Christian Gerhaher and Jakub Józef Orliński.

West Cork Chamber Music Festival

Bantry, Ireland, 28 June – 7 July

westcorkmusic.ie

From coffee concerts through to candle-lit 'Late Night Music', awash with talks and masterclasses, West Cork doesn't let the grass grow under its feet. It has even turned problematic travel issues into a festival finale triumph that repurposes Messiaen and culminates in Mendelssohn's youthful sunburst of a String Octet. Highlights include a Beethoven violin sonata cycle; a compelling Danish strand; and, uniting the Chiaroscuro Quartet and cellist Anastasia Kobekina, Schubert's String Quintet.

Europe

Aix-en-Provence Festival

Aix-en-Provence, France, 3-23 July

festival-aix.com

There's a homecoming to close Aix's operatically rich and diverse edition 2024: Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*. And it couldn't be more appropriate for a festival that journeys to the Japan of Puccini's *Madam Butterfly*, the ancient world of Gluck's *Iphigénie*, Verdi's Sicily and the febrile landscapes of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Raphaël Pichon rescues Rameau's lost *Samson*, and leavening the operas are concerts including the world premiere of Charlotte Bray's *A Sky Too Small*.

Savonlinna Opera Festival

Savonlinna, Finland, 5 July – 4 August

operafestival.fi

The death of Kaija Saariaho last year was keenly felt in her native Finland. And within the 15th-century walls of Savonlinna Castle she's remembered in performances of her searing inditement of the brutality of war: *Adriana Mater*, staged by Sweden's Norrlandsoperan. Also visiting is National Theatre Prague, which marks Smetana 200 with *The Bartered Bride*. Finnish star Karita Mattila steps up to Wagner's *Lohengrin*, and a new production of Verdi's *Nabucco* has an ecological spin.

Dubrovnik Summer Festival

Dubrovnik, Croatia, 10 July – 25 August

dubrovnik-festival.hr

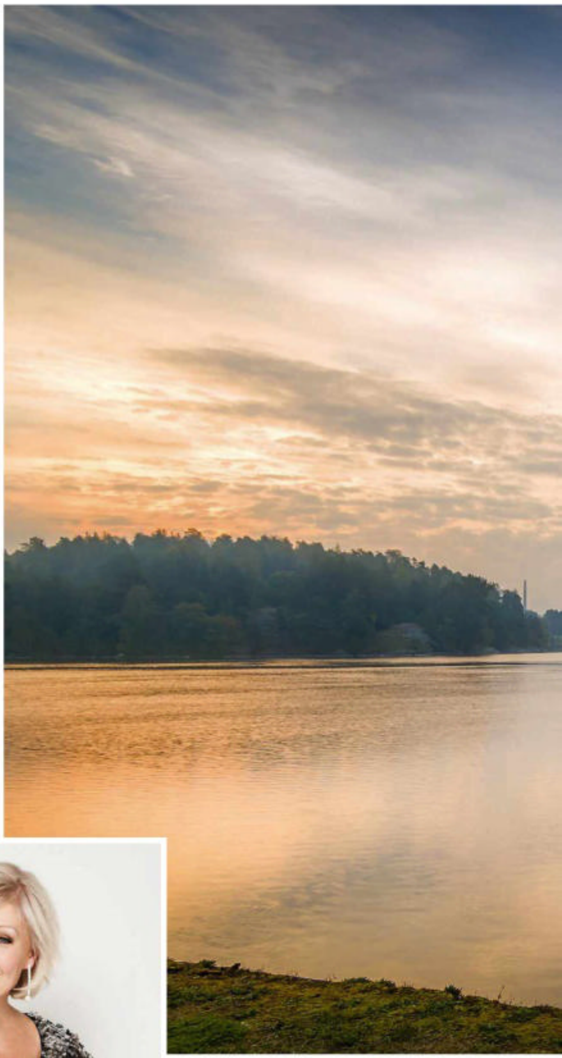
As the 'Pearl of the Adriatic' unleashes a bumper 75th edition of its multi-arts festival, little wonder that Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XXI weigh anchor on 'Mare Nostrum', encouraging dialogue between Christian, Sephardic, Ottoman and Arabic-Andalucian musics. From theatre and dance to world music and jazz, the Mediterranean proves fertile territory. The Arad Quartet, members of Bach Consort Wien, violinist Renaud Capuçon and pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard are invited to the celebrations, which conclude with an opera gala featuring Maltese tenor Joseph Calleja.

Pärnu Music Festival

Pärnu, Estonia, 10-19 July

parnumusicfestival.ee

There's more than just sea and sand to a Pärnu July. With conductors Paavo, Neeme and Kristjan Järvi the guiding lights behind an international festival-cum-academy, musical Estonia's summer stimulates and inspires. By way of a warm-up to next year's 90th-birthday celebrations, Arvo Pärt is handsomely represented; and festival commissions champion new music by Helena Tulve, Maria Kõrvits and Tõnu Kõrvits.



Gstaad Menuhin Festival

Gstaad, Switzerland, 12 July – 31 August

gstaadmenuhinfestival.ch

Enfolded by the Swiss Alps, legendary violinist Yehudi Menuhin's festival has aspired to ever loftier ambitions following its modest debut in 1957. Four mountain-top concerts are an innovation for this year's overarching theme of 'Transformation' – unfolded over some 60 concerts encompassing anything from a Bruckner anniversary nod to a DJ set. The London Symphony Orchestra and Antonio Pappano are out of this world in the company of Holst's *The Planets*; violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja and Camerata Bern contemplate 'Time and Eternity'; and, from Barbara Strozzi to Caroline Shaw, Kammerorchester Basel salutes Venice across four centuries.

Festival Puccini

Torre del Lago, Italy, 12 July – 7 September

puccinifestival.it

Puccini would have felt at home in the festival dedicated to his memory. Literally. Situated in an open-air theatre overlooking Lake Massaciuccoli, it is close both to Lucca where he was born, and to the villa he built for himself and in which he is buried. 2024 is dominated by the centenary of Puccini's death, of course, but the year also marks the 120th anniversary of the (disastrous) premiere of *Madam Butterfly* – which rounds off a season embracing the early operas *Le Willis* and *Edgar*, plus *Turandot*, unfinished at his death.

GETTY, MARICA ROSENGARD, JULIA ALTUKHOVA

Behind the battlements: Olavinlinna Castle in Savonlinna, Finland, where Karita Mattila (below left) will perform; (far left) cellist Anastasia Kobekina is at West Cork Festival; (right) Simon Rattle heads to Verbier

Verbier Festival

Verbier, Switzerland, 18 July – 4 August

verbierfestival.com

Boasting three orchestras, mentoring for soloists and chamber ensembles, an Atelier Lyrique devoted to opera and song, and an audio recording programme, the Verbier Academy is a powerhouse among summer schools. The results are stitched into a festival that opens with Simon Rattle conducting Mahler's Third Symphony and closes with Respighi's Roman trilogy under Charles Dutoit. Along the way, the Salle des Combins welcomes operatic Mozart and Verdi; and, stepping out for his 150th birthday, Schoenberg goes to the cabaret.

Salzburg Festival

Salzburg, Austria, 19 July – 31 August

salzburgfestival.at

Along with Richard Strauss, Hugo von Hofmannsthal was one of the festival's founding fathers, and in his 150th birthday year, his play *Everyman* is refreshed with a new production by Robert Carsen. Salzburg is not short of anniversaries, however. The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra notches up its quarter-century pairing Brahms and Schoenberg. And the latter's 150th birthday is saluted in a 'Time with Schoenberg'. The Bruckner bicentenary tempts Riccardo Muti to tackle Symphony No. 8 for the first time, and with the Vienna Philharmonic he's in safe hands. The philharmonics of Berlin and Oslo are among the visitors, while Mozart bequeaths *Don Giovanni* and *La Clemenza di Tito* to the operatic stable.

Haapsalu Early Music Festival

Haapsalu, Estonia, 25-28 July

studiovocale.ee

Pärnu isn't Estonia's only seaside summer festival. Since 1994, Haapsalu has drawn the musically inquisitive to its ancient Cathedral and venues including the 16th-century Jaani Kirik for a series of choice early music concerts. Conducted by Stephen Layton, Handel's oratorio *Israel in Egypt* cuts a vivid dash, and music from the Italian Baroque is entrusted to Trio Sfacciato. Albert Recasens directs La Grande Chapelle in Victoria's *Missa Vidi speciosam*; and the elusive cembalo d'amore whispers sweet nothings twice over.

Itinéraire Baroque

Cercles, France, 1-4 August

itinerairebaroque.com

Périgord Vert is arguably less well known than the bordering Dordogne, but director of Amsterdam Baroque Ton Koopman succumbed to its charms and to the concert potential of its atmospheric Romanesque churches. The result is a Baroquefest with a difference, as bite-sized pop-up concerts lead audiences on a voyage of discovery through the region's ecclesiastical treasures. In his 80th-birthday year, Koopman concludes the 2024 edition with Bach's not-so-bite-sized *St John Passion*.

Rosendal Chamber Music Festival

Baroniet Rosendal, Norway, 7-11 August

baroniet.no

Taking its cue from Bartók's

101st Arena di Verona Opera Festival
7th June/
7th September 2024
Fondazione
ARENA DI VERONA
SPECIAL EVENT
of the Ministry of Culture
La Grande Opera Italiana Patrimonio dell'Umanità
OPERA
Turandot
Aida
Il Barbiere di Siviglia
Carmen
La Bohème
Tosca
Aida 1913
GALA/ CONCERTS
Roberto Bolle and Friends
IX Sinfonia
Plácido Domingo Noche Española
Carmina Burana
BALLET
AT TEATRO ROMANO
Zorba il greco
100 Emotions plus 1. Yours
The most Italian place on Earth®
arena.it
Major partner
UniCredit
Automotive partner
VOLKSWAGEN
Official sponsor
Bonomi
GENNY
Mobility partner
DB
Accessibility partner
müller

The Dresden Music Festival is an institution of the State Capital of Dresden. It is funded by the Ministry of Science, Culture and Tourism of the State of Saxony and co-financed by tax revenues provided in the budget passed by the Parliament of Saxony.

Sparkasse
Festspiele der Landeshauptstadt Dresden
Dresden.
SACHSEN
Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media

Europe

Music in full bloom: Rosendal Chamber Music's Manor House, where (below) Leif Ove Andsnes plans a Hungarian programme; (opposite) mandolinist Avi Avital performs in Wratislavia

Contrasts, pianist Leif Ove Andsnes's festival has the music of Hungary in its sights. But Liszt, Ligeti and Kodály don't have it all their own way. JS Bach is a looming presence too, and in a year that marks the tercentenary of its first performance, the *St John Passion* is assigned to the Norwegian Soloists' Choir. Joining Andsnes are friends and colleagues, including violinist Vilde Frang, Quatuor Agate and harpsichordist Masato Suzuki.

Lucerne Festival

Lucerne, Switzerland, 13 August – 15 September

lucernefestival.ch

Flanked by the Spring Festival, May's Piano Fest and November's 'Forward Festival' rendezvous with the new, the Lucerne Summer Festival doesn't lack for rivals. But with a dizzying promenade of visiting international orchestras, an ear-grabbing Festival Academy (celebrating its 20th birthday), plus a Festival Contemporary Orchestra, all wrapped around pukka chamber music and solo recitals, in terms of scale Summer is the winner hands down. Musical youth has the first word as the Youth Orchestra of Ukraine adds Borys Lyatoshynsky to Debussy, Elgar and Respighi; and the Festival Orchestra continues Riccardo Chailly's Mahler odyssey with Symphony No. 7. Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* guarantees a suitably epic finale.

Musikfest Berlin

Berlin, Germany, 24 August – 17 September

berlinerfestspiele.de

Think of Musikfest Berlin as a sort of musical alarm call, a signal that a new season beckons. The snooze button is not an option. Among the early birds are the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra and Big Band, and American visitors namecheck the Cleveland Orchestra and Kansas City Symphony. Riccardo Chailly and the Filarmonica della Scala splice Ravel's two *Daphnis et Chloé* suites with Berio and Rihm, while 400 years of slavery is addressed by Jordi Savall who brings together Tembembe, Ensemble Hespèrion XXI and La Capella Reial de Catalunya.

Tsinandali Festival

Tsinandali, Georgia, 31 August – 8 September

tsinandalifestival.ge

Located in the heart of Georgia's wine region, in just five short years Tsinandali has established itself as a festival to be reckoned with. Conducted by Gianandrea Noseda, Verdi's Requiem launches a line-up including pianists Jeremy Denk, Boris Giltburg, András Schiff and Alexandre Kantorow, violinist Joshua Bell, cellist Steven Isserlis and clarinettist Martin Fröst. A fine vintage in the making.

HELGE HANSEN, CHRISTOPH KÖSTLIN

Wratislavia Cantans

Wrocław, Poland, 5-15 September

nfm.wroclaw.pl

The clue is in the title. Established nearly 60 years ago as a festival immersed in the singing voice, Wratislavia Cantans hasn't lost faith with its vocal roots. But it has evolved. And, anchored by Wrocław's splendid National Forum for Music, it welcomes artists and ensembles such as harpsichordist Jean Rondeau, mandolinist Avi Avital and Václav Luks' Collegium Vocale 1704 to an edition under the banner of 'Migrations'. First up, conducted by the festival's artistic director Giovanni Antonini, Il Giardino Armonico tackle Handel's *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*.

New Ross Piano Festival

New Ross, Ireland, 25-29 September

newrosspianofestival.com

For nearly two decades, come late September the port town of New Ross has lifted the lid on a piano festival that refuses to see things in black and white. While classical music bags the lion's share of the programming, a distinctive Jazz Day insists that other genres apply. Finghin Collins is very much hands-on both as performer and artistic director, and across morning coffee concerts and evening recitals the Rachmaninov anniversary was celebrated last year with pianists including Yevgeny Sudbin. Among those wending their way to County Wexford this time around are Paul Lewis and Steven Osborne.

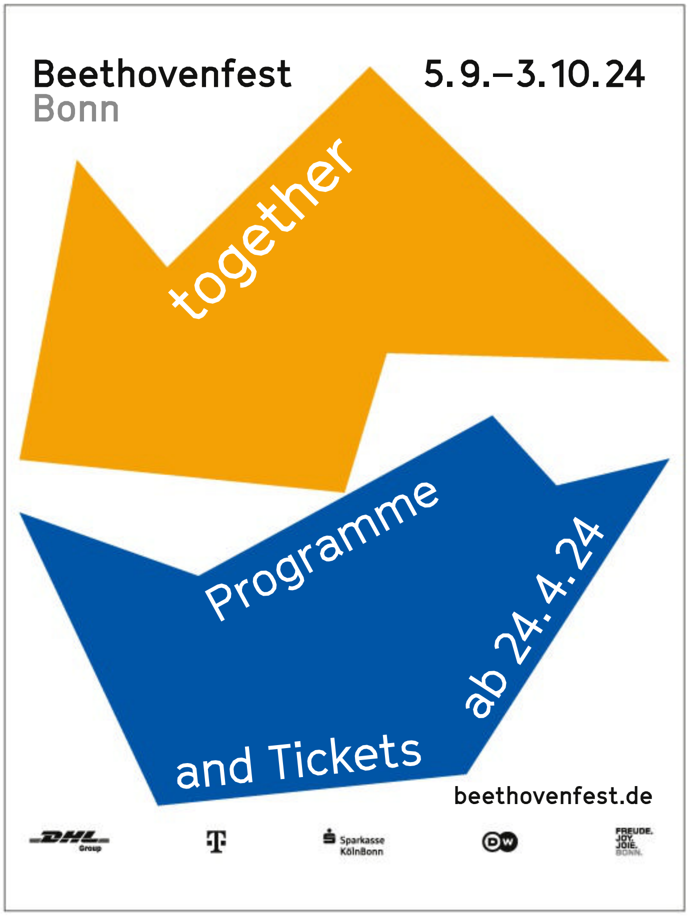
Festival Janáček Brno

Brno, Czech Republic, 1-24 November

janacek-brno.cz

Space travel meets time travel in Janáček's opera *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*, and the concept of 'no limits' is the motto of this year's edition of a festival that homages the composer in his home city. It's not short on ambition. Buttressing the 'Year of Czech Music', the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra commandeers Daniil Trifonov to play Dvořák's Piano Concerto; Staatskapelle Berlin observes Schoenberg's 150th anniversary; and a rich seam of chamber music is mined across Brno's concert halls and villas. Opera, though, is the star, with Robert Carsen's new production of *Brouček* and Staatsoper Unter den Linden Berlin's *The Makropulos Affair* among half-a-dozen productions.

Gewandhaus Orchester
DSCH
DSCH
DSCH
DSCH
SHOSTAKOVICH FESTIVAL LEIPZIG
15 MAY — 01 JUNE 2025
shostakovich-leipzig.com

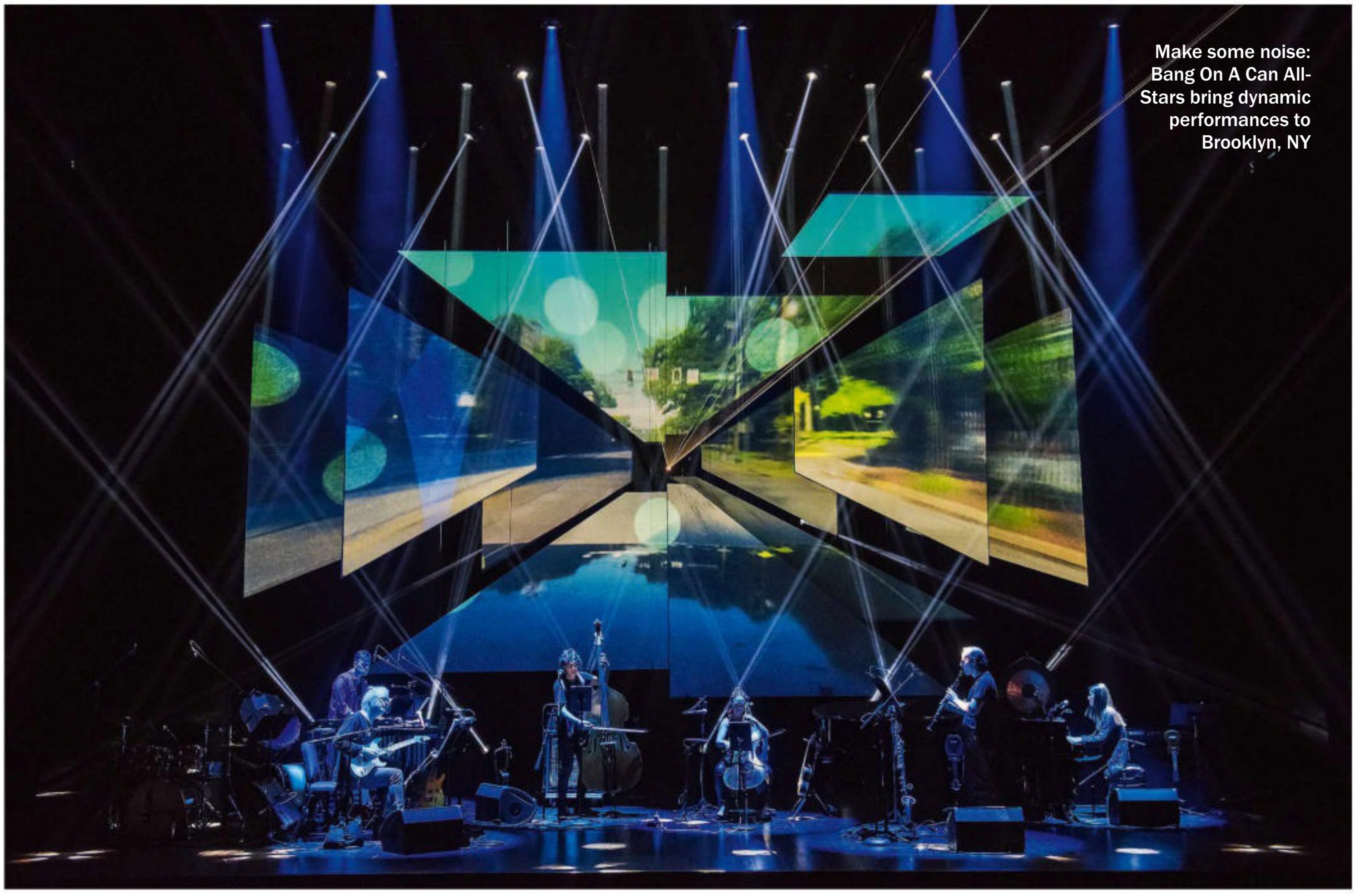


Beethovenfest
Bonn
5.9.–3.10.24
together
Programme
and Tickets
ab 24.4.24
beethovenfest.de
Sparkasse KölnBonn
FREUDE. JOY. JOIE. BONN.

KLOSTERS MUSIC
27 July to 4 August 2024
Thomas Hampson, © Jimmy Donelan
Sat, 27 July 2024, 7.00 pm, Concert Hall, Arena Klosters
CROSSING CONTINENTS
ALINA IBRAGIMOVA VIOLIN
MAXIM EMELYANYCHEV CONDUCTOR
DIE DEUTSCHE KAMMERPHILHARMONIE BREMEN
Sun, 28 July 2024, 5.00 pm, Concert Hall, Arena Klosters
NATIONS & EMPIRES
JAN LISIECKI PIANO
MAXIM EMELYANYCHEV CONDUCTOR
DIE DEUTSCHE KAMMERPHILHARMONIE BREMEN
Mon, 29 July 2024, 7.00 pm, Concert Hall, Arena Klosters
CON PASSIONE!
NURIA RIAL SOPRANO
MAURICE STEGER RECORDER & CONDUCTOR
LA CETRA BAROCKORCHESTER BASEL
Tue, 30 July 2024, 5.00 pm, Concert Hall, Arena Klosters
TINO FLAUTINO AND THE TOMCAT LEO
FAMILY CONCERT
MAURICE STEGER RECORDER & CONDUCTOR
NIKOLAUS SCHMID NARRATOR
LA CETRA BAROCKORCHESTER BASEL
Wed, 31 July 2024, 5.00 pm, Atelier Bolt, Klosters
VOM PANORAMA ZUM TRIPTYCHON
GIOCONDA LEYKAUF-SEGANTINI LECTURE
JAMES ATKINSON BARITONE
HAMISH BROWN PIANO
Thu, 1 August 2024, 7.00 pm, Concert Hall, Arena Klosters
BLUE SKIES
THOMAS HAMPSON BARITONE
JANOSKA ENSEMBLE
Fri, 2 August 2024, 5.00 pm, Church St. Jacob, Klosters
INTO THE DEPTHS
SIR ANDRÁS SCHIFF PIANO
Fri, 2 August 2024, 7.30 pm, Church St. Jacob, Klosters
DIE SCHÖNE MÜLLERIN
SIR ANDRÁS SCHIFF PIANO
JULIAN PRÉGARDIEN TENOR
Sat, 3 August 2024, 7.00 pm, Concert Hall, Arena Klosters
IMPERIAL ENCOUNTERS
BEN GOLDSCHEIDER HORN
CHRISTOPH KONCZ CONDUCTOR
MÜNCHENER KAMMERORCHESTER
Sun, 4 August 2024, 5.00 pm, Concert Hall, Arena Klosters
«AND THE OSCAR GOES TO...»
KEVIN GRIFFITHS CONDUCTOR
CITY LIGHT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
TICKETS ON SALE NOW
Tickets online available at klosters-music.ch

35
RAVENNA FESTIVAL
11 May - 9 July 2024
ravennafestival.org

North America & Canada



Make some noise: Bang On A Can All-Stars bring dynamic performances to Brooklyn, NY

STEPHANIE BERGER, FRICTION PERFORMING ARTS

Long Play Festival

Brooklyn, NYC, 3-5 May

bangonacan.org

Before August's eclectic Long Weekend and July's Summer Festival, there's the small matter of a May prequel – Bang on a Can's Brooklyn bonanza of some 60 concerts of new and newish music. Corralled into three exuberant days, premieres world, US and New York come thick and fast. Included are the Soundwalk Collective with Patti Smith, Anna Meredith's *Nuc* and, performed by Ensemble Klang, Peter Adriaansz's *Environments*. But contemporary classics are not airbrushed. The Ligeti Quartet salutes its namesake; the music of Steve Reich re-echoes; and Ekmeles illuminates David Lang's *The Little Match Girl Passion*.

May Festival

Cincinnati, OH, 17-25 May

mayfestival.com

It's all change in Cincinnati. Last year's 150th-birthday celebrations concluded, the choralfest steps out with a new festival director at the helm. Pulitzer-Prize-winning co-founder of Bang on a Can, Julia Wolfe curates a series bookended by Haydn's *The Creation* and Fauré's Requiem. In between, the world premiere of her own *All that Breathes* spearheads a mini-Wolfe retrospective including the oratorio *Anthracite Fields* and *Her Story*.

Spoleto Festival USA

Charleston, SC, 22 May – 9 June

spoletousa.org

Composer Gian Carlo Menotti had an eye for old world charm – and looking to establish an American equivalent to his Italian Festival of Two Worlds, in Charleston he found it in spades. A man of the musical theatre to his fingertips, he'd applaud Spoleto 2024's curtain-up: the world premiere of Layale Caker's new opera *Ruinous Gods*. In part drawing on Greek mythology, it neatly complements another festival premiere reinterpreting Virgil's *Aeneid*. Theatre and dance weave around a core music programme that features Reena Esmail as composer-in-residence in an 11-concert chamber music series; the Festival Orchestra pairs Mahler's Symphony No. 5 with a new Cello Concerto by Nathalie Joachim – and joins the Festival Chorus for Haydn's *The Creation*. In conversation and music, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, meanwhile, ponders Bach, life and the universe.

OSL Bach Festival

New York, 4-25 June

oslmusic.org

It may be more contained than Oregon's tribute to the Thomaskantor, but Carnegie Hall's minifest is all fired up as Jeannette Sorrell, director of Apollo's Fire, makes her OSL debut. Bernard Labadie conducts Bach transcriptions, and Kristian Bezuidenhout multi-tasks as fortepianist and director in a Mozart-capped evening of JS, JC and CPE Bach.

Ravinia Festival
Highland Park, IL, 7 June – 15 September
ravinia.org
The Chicago Symphony Orchestra first took up official residence in Highland Park in 1936 and, heralded by James Taylor, Norah Jones and The Gypsy Kings, it returns under festival chief conductor Marin Alsop. Returning, too, is her Breaking Barriers festival-within-a-festival, which this year celebrates women leaders in music and space. Mozart's opera *Idomeneo* is conducted by James Conlon and under Gustavo Dudamel, the National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela makes its Ravinia debut.

Ojai Festival
Ojai, CA, 6-9 June
ojaifestival.org
It might be nearing its 80th birthday, but Ojai remains forever young: in part because of its trademark inquisitiveness, but also because of its unparalleled roster of artistic directors that in the past have included Copland, Boulez and John Adams. Pianist Mitsuko Uchida assumes the mantle this year, and acknowledging his anniversary, includes the music of one of her predecessors: Arnold Schoenberg. The Mahler Chamber Orchestra support her in three Mozart piano concertos; the late Kaija Saariaho is remembered; and away from Libbey Bowl, Kurtág's deftly concentrated *Kafka Fragments* haunt.

Caramoor Festival
Katonah, NY, 9 June – 16 August
caramoor.org
A tribute to a passion for collecting, the erstwhile Rosen's family home is an artistic jewel box that, thanks to a lively year-long programme, fills the Music Room, Venetian Theater, Spanish Courtyard and rolling acres with head-turning performances and installations. Pianist Jeremy Denk, the Mark Morris Dance Group and The Knights are Katonah-bound this summer – joining William Christie and Les Arts Florissants, who bring Mourad Merzouki's new production of Purcell's fantastical *The Fairy Queen*.

Bravo! Vail
Vail, CO, 20 June – 1 August
bravovail.org
With Classical Uncorked's cabaret-style performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* on four guitars, and two 'Immersive Experiences' charting Schubert's last year, Bravo! Vail isn't just an orchestral extravaganza. It started out, indeed, as a chamberfest. But with the Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra joined by festival first-timers the Mexican Sinfónica De Minería, Colorado's Rockies are alive with the sound of music grandiose and intimate. Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts two performances of Puccini's *La Bohème*; pianist Jeremy Denk is the soloist in Anna Clyne's *ATLAS*; and the Texans swing by Nashville and Broadway.

Bard Summerscape and Music Festival
Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, 20 June – 18 August
fishercenter.bard.edu
Year-round, Bard's home is the eye-catching Frank Gehry-designed Fisher Center for the Performing Arts. But come summer's eight-week revels featuring theatre, dance, opera and multi-faceted composer portraits, the signature Spiegeltent lends extra glitter. Putting the grand into grand opera is Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète* directed by Christian Räth; Elevator Repair Service dramatises James Joyce's *Ulysses*; and 'Berlioz and his World' is unwrapped in 11 thought-provoking episodes.

Kronos Festival
San Francisco, CA, 22-24 June
kronosquartet.org
Back in 2015, the San Francisco-based Kronos Quartet launched an ambitious project: '50 for the future', a set of commissions subsequently available to all free of charge. After a hectic bout of concert-giving celebrating its half-century, the quartet is on home ground for the annual festival which this year showcases some of those commissioned works. Special guests include the Attacca and Friction quartets; and the finale culminates in a multi-ensemble performance of Philip Glass's *Quartet Satz*.

Aspen Music Festival and School
Aspen, CO, 26 June – 18 August
aspenmusicfestival.com
Aspen turns 75 this year and over the summer is throwing a party, cheered on by returning distinguished alumni. And it's not afraid to try on the quirky for size – an ensemble of banjo, bass, tabla and bansuri anyone? 'Becoming Who You Are' is the appropriate watchword of music director Robert Spano's celebratory edition. Two operatic ▶

The bows have it: Friction Quartet heads to Kronos Festival

North America & Canada

evergreens – Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* – are complemented by Matthew Aucoin's *Music for New Bodies* directed by Peter Sellars, and Renée Fleming premieres an orchestral song cycle by Alan Fletcher. Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, meanwhile, keeps company with an all-star line-up of violinist Joshua Bell, cellist Steven Isserlis and pianist Jeremy Denk for Beethoven's irrepressible Triple Concerto.

Grand Teton Music Festival

Jackson Hole, WY, 27 June – 17 August

gtmf.org

Every summer, over 200 musicians from some 70 orchestras converge on Walk Festival Hall for a two-month jamboree currently under the direction of Donald Runnicles. This year, the hall itself is taking (and giving!) centre stage as Yo-Yo Ma helps celebrate its half-century. Nestling among well-loved classics are a new work by Detlev Glanert, Missy Mazzoli's 2022 Violin Concerto and the premiere of a new piece for percussion and orchestra by Clarice Assad. Supplying an 'enlightening' finale are two semi-staged performances of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Santa Fe Opera

Santa Fe, NM, 28 June – 24 August

santafeopera.org

Sante Fe opened its very first season with a brand-new opera, and nearly 70 years on is about to stage its 19th: Gregory Spears's *The Righteous* – the tale of a man's conflicted journey from preacher to governor. Kevin Newbury's new production is one of four in a season that includes Strauss's sumptuous *Der Rosenkavalier* directed by Bruno Ravello and conducted by Karina Canellakis. Verdi's *La traviata* raises the curtain, updated to 1939 Paris.

Oregon Bach Festival

Eugene, OR, 28 June – 14 July

oregonbachfestival.org

Things are looking up, as distinguished Bachian John Butt conducts two performances of the *Ascension Oratorio* to launch Oregon Bach '24. And he's also on hand to explore the music of the Dresden Court. But Bach is by no means ubiquitous. Ken-David Masur conducts a closing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* is paired with Holst's *The Planets – An HD Odyssey*; and Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Mass for the Endangered* sounds a requiem for the 'not yet gone'.

Front of Strauss: Karina Canellakis conducts *Der Rosenkavalier* at Santa Fe Opera

GETTY

Maverick Concerts

Hurley, Woodstock, NY, 29 June – 14 September

maverickconcerts.org

Maverick by name; maverick by nature! It's not just the timber-framed concert hall in the woods that lends quirky distinctiveness to America's longest continually running festival. Alexander Platt's inquisitive programming is enticingly distinctive too. East Asian-American creatives and the Fauré centenary inform a 2024 line-up that includes The Four Nations Ensemble ensconced in 18th-century Paris; a composer portrait of Viet Cuong; the Maverick debut of pianist Angela Hewitt; and a day celebrating the life and legacy of Herr PDQ Bach: Woodstock's very own Peter Schickele.

Newport Classical Music Festival

Newport, RI, 4-21 July

newportclassical.org

Chamber music in elegant chambers could be the 55-year-old festival's motto as it commandeers Rhode Island mansions as well as spilling over into the al fresco delights of Norman Bird Sanctuary and King Park. In store across 27 concerts and community events are a new work by Clarice Assad; Corelli, Handel and Bach from Boston's Handel and Haydn Society; vocal orchestra Chanticleer; and, directed by Tara Barnham, Peter Brook's reworking of Bizet: *La tragédie de Carmen*.

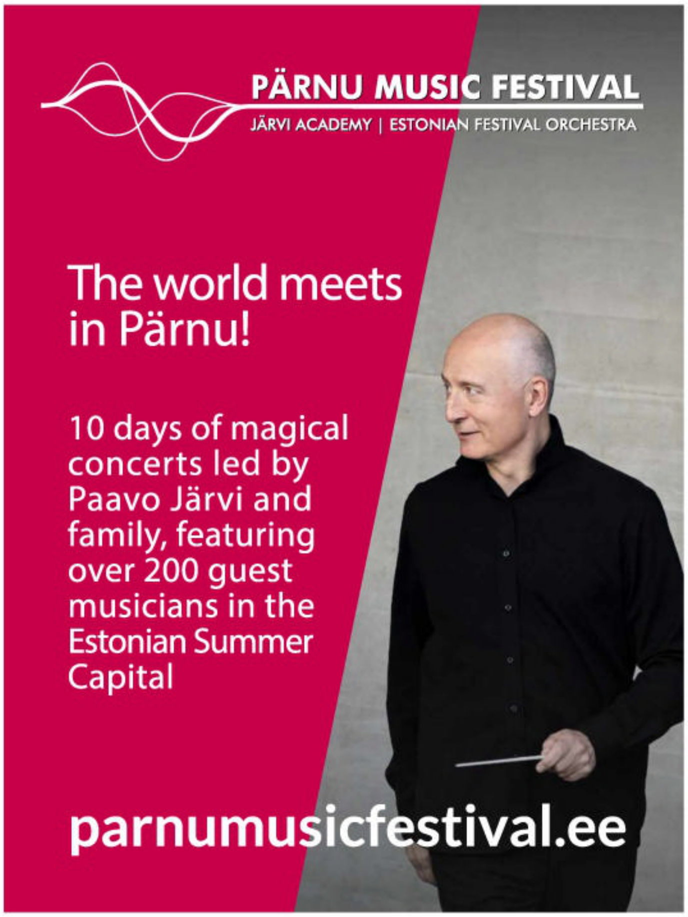
Tanglewood
Lenox, MA, 5 July – 31 August
tanglewood.org
Prefaced by a string quartet marathon, James Taylor and a prelude concert, Tanglewood officially opens with Beethoven from Andris Nelsons – who later enlists Boston Ballet for Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagète* and conducts Act III of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. In the hall named after the late Seiji Ozawa, the Danish String Quartet, violinist Leonidas Kavakos and pianist Daniil Trifonov dispense elevated chamber music. 2024, however, also marks the 150th birthday of Tanglewood mover-and-shaker Serge Koussevitzky. Major celebrations are afoot!

Colorado Music Festival
Boulder, CO, 5 July - 4 August
coloradomusicfestival.org
When Colorado proposes bite-sized rock concerts, it's not quite what you might think. Ten-minute pop-up concerts against the backdrop of the mountainous Flatirons showcase musicians from a festival orchestra that unites members across several countries. Anna Clyne's *Masquerade* awaits them on first night, Mahler's Fourth Symphony on the last. And roughly midway between, music director Peter Oundjian conducts the premiere of a new orchestral piece by Gabriela Lena Frank featuring the Takács Quartet as ensemble soloists. It is flanked by Florence Price plus Joan Towers's 1991 Concerto for Orchestra.

Festival Napa Valley
Napa Valley, CA, 6-21 July
festivalnapavalley.org
The vineyards of Napa Valley are not just famous for the bouquet of their wines – as summer intensifies, there are musical bouquets to be savoured too. The 2024 vintage is eclectic, and with more than a touch of 'La dolce vita' as Sophia Loren is celebrated and tribute paid to Henry Mancini at 100. Kent Nagano conducts Mozart's 'Turkish' opera *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, while BODYTRAFFIC, pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet, violinist Ray Chen and soprano Pretty Yende are California dreamin'.

Toronto Summer Music
Toronto, ON, 11 July – 3 August
torontosummermusic.com
Chamber music and art song are the twin pillars on which the festival's Academy is built, and with an impressive array of mentors, summer's accompanying concert season has stars in its eyes. Following Les Arts Florissants' new production of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, mainstage concerts include Mahler and Berg from mezzo Sarah Connolly, Schmaltz & Pepper's foray into Klezmer, and a pairing of sextet Chausson with septet Beethoven. Eight Regeneration concerts feature Academy Fellows and mentors performing side-by-side.

Manchester Music Festival
Manchester, VT, 11 July – 8 August
mmfvt.org
More than 30 concerts and events



North America & Canada

Rise and shine: violinist Leonidas Kavakos is at Sun Valley Music Festival

help the verdant Vermont chamberfest to celebrate its half-century in style. Its new artistic director is the Emerson Quartet's founding violinist Philip Setzer, and under the banner of 'The Romantic Journey' he's programmed a timeline stretching from Beethoven and Schubert to a specially commissioned work by Sarah Kirkland Snider. Visitors include pianist Vassily Primakov and soprano Christine Goerke.

Stratford Summer Music

Stratford, ON, Canada, 18 July – 11 August

stratfordsummermusic.ca

For nigh-on a quarter-century, the second incarnation of Stratford's musical summer has flourished in a city that likes to brush up on its Shakespeare. Sitting on the banks of the Avon, it even boasts its own Shakespearean Gardens, namechecking plants featured in the Bard's plays. Benjamin Britten and Johnny Cash shake hands in an opening night Gala; pianist Angela Hewitt indulges the three 'B's with a side order of Scarlatti; while in the Perth Museum the Vesuvius Ensemble promises an eruption of southern Italian song.

Music@Menlo

Menlo, CA, 19 July – 10 August

musicatmenlo.org

La belle France is preoccupying this year's Silicon Valley rendezvous with concerts, café conversations, encounters, masterclasses and a Carte Blanche series that includes Jean-Efflam Bavouzet playing Ravel's complete piano music. Setting the scene is a contest between the French and German Baroque, while the finale prefaces Messiaen and Crumb with valedictory Bach. Bon appétit!

Glimmerglass Festival

Cooperstown, NY, 22 Jul – 20 August

glimmerglass.org

Lakeside Glimmerglass hoists the Jolly Roger over a season that opens with Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*. 'Identity and Illusion' is the theme for 2024, and Italian verismo and frolicsome buffoonery go head-to-head as Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* and Cavalli's *La Calisto* take centre stage, alongside Kevin Puts's *Elizabeth Cree*. An opera plumbing a troubled slice of 1880s London life, the latter is directed by Alison Moritz and features artist-in-residence, Irish mezzo Tara Erraught, in the title role.

Ottawa Chamberfest

Ottawa, ON, Canada, 25 July – 8 August

chamberfest.com

From Midday Matinées to Chamber Chats – not forgetting the prestigious Signature Series – the festival has a penchant for alliteration as well as adventurous city-wide programming, that even includes contemplative sessions in the historic Beechwood Cemetery. Among the 30th-anniversary cohort of performers are pianist Marc-André Hamelin, Art of Time Ensemble and the Danish String Quartet.

Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music

Santa Cruz, CA, 29 July – 11 August

cabrillomusic.org

Cabrillo doesn't just pay lip service to the new. It lives it! And hats off, too, to a festival orchestra never able to fall back on the tried and tested. Under the direction of conductor Cristian Mãcelaru, 14 prospective composers-in-residence will be descending on Santa Cruz for a season that includes world premieres of works by Ivan Enrique Rodriguez, Karim Al-Zand and the first recipient of the Emerging Black Composers Prize, Nathaniel Heyder. In the Creative Lab, meanwhile, sound artist/composer Bora Yoon puts technology through its interactive paces.

Sun Valley Music Festival

Sun Valley, ID, 29 July – 22 August

svmusicfestival.org

What with guest artists including violinist Leonidas Kavakos, and pianists Stephen Hough and Garrick Ohlsson, the 40th-edition Sun Valley is walking on sunshine – and dancing, too, to the catchy rhythms of Gabriela Ortiz's *Antropólis*. There's a new cello concerto by Andy Akiho; Mahler's Sixth Symphony wrestles with fate; and, joining music director Alasdair Neale, cellist Yo-Yo Ma heads up a special anniversary gala.

MARCO BORGGREVE

THE SANTA FE OPERA
2024 JUN 28 – AUG 24
WORLD PREMIERE
The Righteous
Gregory Spears
Tracy K. Smith
July 13, 17, 26, 30
August 7, 13
LA TRAVIATA
Verdi
DON GIOVANNI
Mozart
WORLD PREMIERE
THE RIGHTEOUS
Spears / Smith
DER ROSENKAVALIER
Strauss
THE ELIXIR OF LOVE
Donizetti
#OpenAirOpera
FOUR SEASONS RESORT
RANCHO ENCANTADO, SANTA FE
Opening Nights Sponsor
855-674-5401
fourseasons.com/santafe
Explore the Season
For tickets and more information visit santafeopera.org or call 505-986-5900
The Righteous Illustration by Benedetto Cristofani

RAVINIA®
CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
SUMMER
RESIDENCY
FEATURING
MARIN ALSOP, Ravinia Chief Conductor
MAHLER 9 • AUGUSTIN HADELICH, violin
BEETHOVEN 5 • ABEL SALAOCOE, cello
BERLIOZ SYMPHONY FANTASTIQUE
JONATHAN RUSH, conductor
GERSHWIN RHAPSODY IN BLUE
MICHELLE CANN, piano • and more!
SCAN ME
PUBLIC TICKET SALES BEGIN
APRIL 24
ONLY AT RAVINIA.ORG

MIDSUMMER VILNIUS
MIDSUMMER VILNIUS '24
From July 15th to 26th, the ninth edition of the "Midsummer Vilnius" performing arts festival will take place in the breathtaking courtyard next to the iconic Vilnius Cathedral, where hundreds of talented artists from all over the world will perform.
The "Midsummer Vilnius" visitors are welcomed to immerse themselves in unique performances, witness exceptional international collaborations, and be among the first to experience world premieres.
FESTIVAL RECOMMENDS: OPERA UNDER THE STARS
Opera Under the Stars is an extraordinary spectacle worth experiencing at least once in a lifetime.
On the evening of 25 July, French composer Bizet's masterpiece, Carmen, will be presented on stage. The performance features one of Lithuania's most talented opera soloists, Edgaras Montvidas, celebrated for his portrayal of over 40 roles at esteemed venues such as the English National Opera and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. Joining him will be French mezzo-soprano Stéphanie d'Oustrac, accompanied by the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Modestas Pitrėnas, along with other distinguished guests of the evening.
FULL PROGRAM and TICKETS
www.midsummervilnius.com/en/

DISCOVER UNIQUE
INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS AND COMPETITIONS
FOR CHOIRS 2024 / 2025
FIND OUT MORE NOW:
WWW.INTERKULTUR.COM/EVENTS
INTERKULTUR
SCAN ME

Rest of the World

Turning up the heat: Trio Karénine perform in Canberra; (below) tenor Juan Diego Flórez is in Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi Festival

United Arab Emirates, year-long

abudhabifestival.ae

Not for Abu Dhabi the defining constrictions of time and place. It's a festival with year-round global aspirations that, two decades since its foundation, boasts a performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 2 in Paris and, in December, new music inspired by the paintings of Bob Peak at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. Co-produced recordings by tenor Juan Diego Flórez and violinist Yamen Saadi add a legacy to an anniversary edition that ends with the China National Symphony Orchestra.

Weiwuying International Music Festival

National Kaohsiung Centre for the Arts, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, until 21 April

npac-weiwuying.org

As she ponders the third instalment of

Taiwan's flagship festival, composer-artistic director Unsuk Chin is in upbeat mood. With the capacious facilities of the world's largest multi-space arts centre at her command, music ranging from Eötvös and Berlioz to Janáček and Unsuk Chin herself is corralled into artfully themed programmes. Showcasing the Weiwuying Contemporary Music Ensemble, 'Street Theatre and Hot Dances' proposes a heady mash-up of Kurtág, Bolcom and Ligeti, among others.

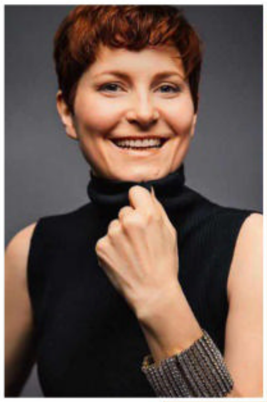
Canberra International Music Festival

Canberra, Australia, 1-5 May

cimf.org.au

It might have started out as an intimate chamber music festival colonising Canberra's homes and embassies, but my how it's grown. This year's 30th anniversary jamboree is Roland Peelman's last as artistic director, and he bows out in style. From France comes Trio Karénine, who forge a Franco-Hispanic entente cordiale and collaborate with Dudok Quartet Amsterdam. Across two concerts, Bach

Akademie Australia delves into the *Brandenburgs*; *Red Dirt Hymns* are sung; and Holly Harrison's new percussion trio headlines the grand finale.



Land of the rising song: Elias Grandy conducts in Sapporo; (left) mezzo Michaela Selinger adorns Suntory Hall's Chamber Music Garden

Greyton Genadendal Classics for All Festival

Western Cape, South Africa, 10-12 May

classicsforall.co.za

The neighbouring villages of Greyton and Genadendal are in celebratory mood as their resolutely inclusive festival notches up its 20th birthday. Old musical friends return, and new artistic friendships are forged. Cape Town Baroque Orchestra takes a dive into the late Baroque alongside Vivaldi and Corelli; pianists François du Toit and Isaac van der Merwe team up for four-handed Schubert; and the Da Cape'O string quartet criss-crosses eastern Europe en route to 'Hungarian' Brahms.

Coriole Music Festival

McLaren Vale, Australia, 18, 19 May

coriolemusicfestival.com

If music be the food of love, Coriole has the wine flights to match. Set among the extensive rolling vineyards of McLaren Vale, the festival has been pairing delectable comestibles and chamber music for a quarter of a century, and 2024's menu explores the notion of 'home'. Homebirds include Peter Sculthorpe and Vaughan Williams, Golijov and Silvestrov; the last word falls to Olli Mustonen's pithy Nonetto II.

Suntory Hall Chamber Music Garden

Suntory Hall, Tokyo, Japan, 1-16 June

suntory.com/culture-sports/suntoryhall/

Tokyo's venerable Suntory Hall has been welcoming audiences for nearly 40 years, and each June hosts Japan's premiere chamber music festival – named after the garden that adorns the building's roof. As ever, Beethoven is writ large. There's a complete quartet cycle from the Verus String Quartet, all five cello sonatas and another instalment in the Aoi Trio's seven-year voyage through the piano trios. Visiting performers include the Jerusalem Quartet and the Austrian mezzo-soprano Michaela Selinger – who squares up to Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*.

Pacific Music Festival

Sapporo, Japan, 10-30 July

pmf.or.jp/en/

Founded by Leonard Bernstein, PMF doesn't do things by halves. The teaching faculty unites players from the philharmonics of Vienna and Berlin, while conductors Manfred Honeck and Elias Grandy follow in the footsteps of Bernard Haitink and Riccardo Muti, among others. Bernstein's scintillating *Candide* Overture raises the curtain, and the Bernstein Memorial Concert features a Lennie favourite: Mahler's Symphony No. 5

Jerusalem Lyric Opera Festival

Jerusalem, Israel, 22-25 July

lyric-opera.org

Handel seems to be having something of a moment in Jerusalem's annual celebration of the operatic arts. *Alcina* wove her enchanted spell last year, and 2024's tercentenary anniversary of the premiere of *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* does not go unnoticed. Indeed, Egypt also provides the backdrop to the festival's finale: Verdi's *Aida*. In the Museum of Italian Jewish Art, the Fauré centenary is remembered in poetry and song.

Australian Festival of Chamber Music

Townsville, Australia, 26 July – 4 August

afcm.com.au

Where else can you find an island concert with whale watching, and – tissues at the ready – a heartrending Schubertian double-bill pairing the String Quintet with *Die schöne Müllerin*? It can only be violinist Jack Liebeck's distinctive Queensland festival. With no fewer than seven living 'composers-in-focus', a Sunset Series that cuts Shostakovich down to size and makes free with Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, and a fond farewell to quartet-in-residence the Goldners, action-packed doesn't

GREEN ROOM CREATIVES/YURI ANDRIES, ELISA HABERER, GETTY, JONAS HOLTHAUS, SHERVIN LAINEZ

Rest of the World

begin to do it justice. Add in a couple of didgeridoos, the multi-tasking of Brett Dean, plus clarinettist Julian Bliss, and Townsville twinkles.

Taipei Music Academy and Festival

Taipei, Taiwan, 28 July – 11 August

taipeimaf.com

With an advisory committee including pianist Emanuel Ax, cellist Yo-Yo Ma and conductor Kent Nagano, Taipei's mission to explain, instruct and inspire boasts blue-chip backers. A chamber music first week turns orchestral in the second, culminating in a three-concert tour of Brahms, Elgar and Dvořák conducted by Leonard Slatkin.

Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival

Matsumoto, Japan, 9 August – 4 September

ozawa-festival.com

There will be mixed emotions in Matsumoto this year. The resident Saito Kinen Orchestra celebrates its 40th birthday. Yet at the same time a sense of loss is inescapable – the festival's founder Seiji Ozawa died in February, and his guiding spirit will be missed. Shouldering the conducting are Andris Nelsons and Nodoka Okisawa (only recently appointed principal guest conductor by Ozawa). The latter undertakes the opening concerts coupling Mendelssohn and Richard Strauss; and she also masterminds the opera choice: Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*. Nelsons, meanwhile, delivers a complete Brahms symphony cycle – key works in the orchestra's early history.

Tribute to Ozawa: Nodoka Okisawa conducts in Matsumoto

FELIX BROEDE

Beijing International Music Festival and Academy

Beijing, China, 11-21 August

bimfa.org

Bringing together professional and student musicians from around the globe, China's only summer-school-cum-festival contemplates its 20th anniversary edition. Coaching and masterclasses rub shoulders with competitions, public performance and a festival concert series by guest artists as well as faculty members. With downtime excursions to the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and Summer Palace, there's a feast for the eyes and the ears.

Paul Lewis,
resident artist. Schubert's sonates (complete)

José María Sánchez-Verdú,
Composer in residence

GREAT ORCHESTRAS

Wiener Philharmoniker / Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester / Orchestre de Paris / Orchestre de la Suisse Romande / Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse / Le Concert des Nations / Orquesta Sinfónica RTVE / Orquesta Ciudad de Granada / Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España / Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León / Academia Barroca del Festival de Granada / Orquesta de la Escuela Reina Sofía

THE BEST ORCHESTRA CONDUCTORS

Kirill Petrenko / Jordi Savall / Christoph Eschenbach / Tarmo Peltokoski / Lorenzo Viotti / David Afkham / Klaus Mäkelä / András Schiff / Charles Dutoit / Vasily Petrenko / José María Sánchez-Verdú / Aarón Zapico

INSTRUMENTAL SOLOISTS

Martha Argerich / Elisabeth Leonskaja / Jean-Guihen Queyras / Benjamin Alard / Juan Floristán / Seong-Jin Cho / Paul Lewis / András Schiff / Alexandre Kantorow / Bernard Foccroulle / Yago Mahúgo / Mario Brunello

VOCAL SOLOISTS

Christiane Karg / Elsa Dreisig / Sarah Wegener / Wiebke Lehmkuhl / Maximilian Schmitt / Ashley Riches

CHAMBER MUSIC

Trío Arbós / Cuarteto Quiroga / Schumann Quartett & Seong-Jin Cho / Quartet Gerhard / Liber Quartet / Cosmos Quartet & Katharina Konradi / Staatkapelle Berlin Quartett & Elisabeth Leonskaja / Benjamin Alard & Israel Galván / Accademia del Piaccere & Fahmi Alquai / Konstantin Krimmel & Daniel Heide / Edith Peña & Alexei Volodin / Raquel Lojendio & Aurelio Viribay / Ana María Valderrama & David Kadouch

THE GREAT BALLETS

Ballet Nacional de España & Rubén Olmo / Compañía Nacional de Danza & Joaquín De Luz / Compañía Blanca Li / Sara Baras / Compañía Antonio Gades & Stella Arauzo / Lucía Lacarra Ballet / Ballet Nice Méditerranée & Éric Vu-An

THE BEST FLAMENCO AND FADO

David Palomar / Montse Cortés / Rocío Molina /El Pele / Esperanza Fernández / Kiki Morente / Cristian de Moret / Mariza

...and Jazz with a spanish accent.

YOU WILL FIND ALL THIS AND MUCH MORE AT THE 73RD GRANADA FESTIVAL FROM JUNE 7 TO JULY 14, 2024

Information and ticket sales starting April 4

Six Days of Extraordinary Music

GŴYL GERDD
EGLWYS GADEIRIOL TYDDEWI

ST DAVIDS CATHEDRAL
MUSIC FESTIVAL

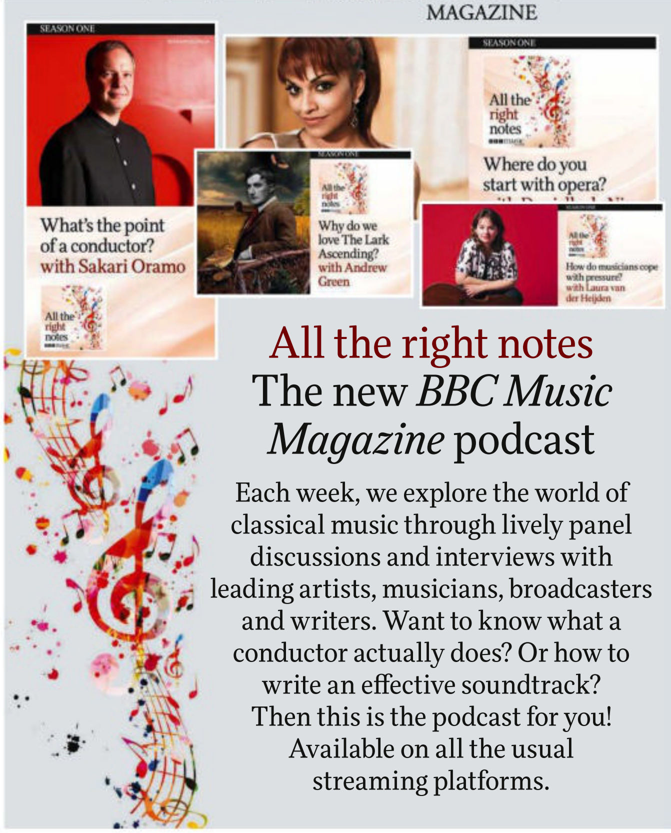
24 - 29 MAY 2024

Artists include:

BBC National Orchestra of Wales & Inmo Yang
The Choir of Royal Holloway
Emma Johnson & The Orchestra of the Environment
Preseli Trio
Alaw
St Davids Cathedral Choir
And More!

Tickets start at just £8 (U18s go free)
For tickets: call 01437 722002,
or visit www.stdavidscathedral.org.uk/music-festival

BBC music MAGAZINE



All the right notes
The new *BBC Music Magazine* podcast

Each week, we explore the world of classical music through lively panel discussions and interviews with leading artists, musicians, broadcasters and writers. Want to know what a conductor actually does? Or how to write an effective soundtrack? Then this is the podcast for you! Available on all the usual streaming platforms.

Get ONBOARD

Your greatest discovery yet

Whether you want to cruise the coastlines of the Caribbean, Rome further from home or marvel at the heights of the northern lights, we've got it all.

Find expert guides, get inspired and uncover exclusive deals. All this and more, for FREE.

CRUISE COLLECTIVE

MUSICAL DESTINATIONS

Ibiza Spain

Despite its reputation as the world's clubbing capital, the sunny island of Ibiza has much to offer classical music fans, finds *Claire Jackson*

On the cliffs of the White Isle: Linus Roth founded his festival in 2018; (below opposite) Rocío Osuna flamenco dances at the 2023 edition; the markets of San Carlos

DAN CARABAS, FABIAN CANTIERI, GETTY

Headphones adjusted, the conductor raises his arms. Strings twist and turn, the sound swells; electronic vocals ride the crest of the wave. The beat drops. Then, as lights flash across the Royal Albert Hall, glockenspiels duet over a keyboard motif. The short phrase is repeated, with metronome precision, for several minutes – but it's not Reich or Glass, it's Fatboy Slim and Eric Prydz. When the BBC Proms hosted an Ibiza-themed programme in 2015, it wasn't the gimmick that it first appeared: not only does an instrumental performance of dance music – a largely electronic genre – require impressive technical skill, the Prom recognised the continuing cultural mystique associated with the Balearic island. Over the past two decades, Ibiza has become renowned for its nightclubs that attract the world's best DJs; yet music spills out beyond the turntables, with recitals in medieval churches, along cobbled streets and within glassy galleries.

The sun smiles down on Dalt Vila, the oldest part of Ibiza Town. The Unesco heritage site buzzes in the high season; tourists sip sangria in the shade overlooking the yacht-filled port. I follow a swallowtail butterfly up the hill, watching it gather nectar on a cascading window box. Brahms's Piano Quintet filters through from a cloister's inner courtyard.

This is the location of Ibiza Conciertos, an annual chamber music festival hosted by German violinist Linus Roth. Inside, the musicians rehearse for the evening's concert – all performances take place at 9pm, when the night is still young on the

Musical tapas: Roth and Petrit Çeku perform Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* last summer

Local hero
Lina Tur Bonet

Ibiza-born violinist Lina Tur Bonet (above) combines teaching (she's professor of Baroque violin and viola at Weimar's Hochschule für Musik) and performing alongside Musica Alchemica, with whom she has recorded rare Vivaldi pieces – including the reconstructed 'Graz' Sonatas – Biber's *Rosary Sonatas* and, most recently, Bach's 'Himmelsburg' Violin Concertos. Bonet maintains her Spanish connections: she is associate professor at Madrid's Reina Sofía School of Music and was awarded the 2017 Gold Medal of the City of Ibiza.

White Isle. 'I love Ibiza with all my heart,' says Roth, whose series is in its sixth year. 'It's much more than just the clubbing.'

Roth – best known in the UK for his Weinberg Wigmore Hall cycle and recordings – is a visiting professor at Madrid's Reina Sofía School Of Music, where several festival musicians are currently studying. 'Including the next generation is important,' he says, 'as well as local artists.' In 2023, Ibizan Rocío Osuna danced traditional flamenco as part of a fandango-inspired programme featuring Viardot's *Morceaux* Nos 1, 2 & 4 and Boccherini's Quintet for strings and guitar.

Roth's feeling for Ibiza began in 2010, when he was invited to give recitals on the island. The audience loved him, and he returned year after year, eventually launching his own festival in 2018. The focus is on chamber music classics – the likes of Brahms, Mozart and the Schumanns are all there – but Roth also likes to add a little glitter. Last summer, it was a new arrangement of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* for violin and guitar, which he performed with Petrit Çeku.

Having relied on agriculture and the production of salt (leading to the 'white island' nickname), Ibiza's popularity as a tourist destination grew in the 1960s – then exploded in the 1990s with the arrival of cheap flights. DJs such as Alfredo Fiorito, who had emigrated to Ibiza from Argentina, were developing what would become the Balearic beat. This merged

> 'I like to bring people together who might not have worked in partnership before'

with the UK rave scene, acid house and social changes during the second summer of love. Meanwhile, San Carlos, a village in the north east of the island known as a hippy enclave, became the surprising centre for the Ibiza International Music Festival and Ibiza International Piano Competition. Since 1987, the organisers have held 25 editions.

While watching a DJ spin decks is enough for punters prepared to pay exorbitant fees for clubs like Pacha and Amnesia, nothing is more exciting than seeing an orchestra on stage. The Ibiza Prom tapped into the sensory aspects of live music, in a similar way to play-along film concerts. The Ibiza Orchestra Experience sees a 26-strong ensemble play arrangements by Daft Punk, Prodigy and Massive Attack, touring from Aberdeen to Winchester (in 2024). There's no animosity: dance acts like Basement Jaxx have supported previous tours, following their 2011 album with Metropole Orkest.

That seems to be a common thread throughout music in Ibiza. 'I like to bring together people who might not have worked in partnership before,' says Roth. 'It's like tapas: the strength of the meal comes from the combination of dishes.'

This year's Ibiza Conciertos festival runs from 23-27 August

Further info: ibizaconciertos.com

Composer of the Week is broadcast on Radio 3 at 4pm, Monday to Friday. Programmes in May are:
29 April – 3 May Debussy
6-10 May CPE Bach
13-17 May Maconchy
20-24 May Rimsky-Korsakov
27-31 May Vivaldi

Sergei Taneyev

Though emotionally reserved in person, the Russian revealed his latent passion through his deftly crafted music, explains ***Daniel Jaffé***

ILLUSTRATION: MATT HERRING

Taneyev's style

GETTY

Singing lines Taneyev wrote most lyrically for strings or the human voice. In his songs, he wrote expressive yet subtle vocal lines married to illustrative and detailed piano accompaniments, an approach his pupil Rachmaninov (above) emulated.

Sweeping narratives Generally, Taneyev did not concern himself with writing earworms, though his early piano pieces such as the *Andantino semplice* are quirky yet hauntingly memorable. Usually, he relied on his music's emotional directness and other elements of intrinsic beauty – such as instrumental colour and harmonic expressiveness – to engage his listener and take them through long but coherent musical paragraphs.

Fondness for fugue He was celebrated for his contrapuntal mastery, spectacularly demonstrated in *At the Reading of a Psalm*. Several of his works, such as the C minor Symphony and the String Quintet No. 1, culminate in a fugue – an example Rachmaninov and even Shostakovich followed.

Uniting distant eras His knack of switching abruptly from one style to another, as in the Suite de Concert (1909), anticipates Stravinsky's neo-classicism. But where Stravinsky seems to objectify and play with past styles, Taneyev treats the music of Handel, Beethoven and Mozart as familiar and well-loved friends, mixing easily with music inspired by Tchaikovsky or Wagner.

Anyone reading about the life and career of Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Scriabin or Prokofiev – just to mention four of Russia's best-loved and most celebrated composers – will inevitably encounter Sergei Taneyev. A child prodigy who entered the Moscow Conservatory aged nine, he was not quite 13 when he became Tchaikovsky's pupil. He soon became the great composer's closest confidante in matters musical, and himself became a highly respected teacher and mentor loved by many of Russia's most celebrated pianists and composers.

Even Stravinsky, never a pupil of his, spoke warmly of Taneyev (as he rarely did of composers of that generation) as late as the 1950s. No slouch in fugue and counterpoint himself, Stravinsky recognised Taneyev's treatise on *Invertible Counterpoint* as 'one of the best books of its kind'; he also, unfashionably, respected him as a composer, 'especially for certain passages in his opera *The Oresteia*'.

All that said, Taneyev was known first and foremost as one of the greatest pianists of the late-19th century. Trained by the great Nikolai Rubinstein, he made his concerto debut aged 18, performing the Russian premiere of Brahms's mighty First Piano Concerto. Just months later, after his first trip abroad to Greece and Italy, Taneyev gave the triumphant Moscow premiere of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto, a work that had previously and infamously been branded as 'unplayable' by Rubinstein. Taneyev would subsequently give the first performances of all of Tchaikovsky's major piano works.

Shortly after his triumph with Tchaikovsky's First, Taneyev – at Rubinstein's recommendation – travelled to Paris, staying there between October 1876 and June 1877. There he was introduced to the singer Pauline Viardot, much celebrated in Russia since her first visit in 1843, through whom he met the author Turgenev (who had followed Viardot back to Paris) and leading composers including Saint-Saëns, D'Indy, Franck, Fauré and Duparc.

Although several of these musicians shared Taneyev's budding interest in past contrapuntal masters such as JS Bach, Josquin and Lassus, what they all had in common was an admiration of that revolutionary modern composer, Wagner. Inspired by their enthusiasm, Taneyev wrote a self-memo that he would 'learn by memory one of his Nibelungs and travel to Germany to hear it'.

But back in Russia, Taneyev was soon sidetracked by teaching duties at his alma mater. Tchaikovsky, keen to devote more time on his own compositions, in 1878 arranged for his protégé to take over his classes in harmony and instrumentation; just five years later, Taneyev was put in charge of the class in free composition. Then, with Tchaikovsky's endorsement, he was made director of the Moscow Conservatory in 1885.

To the surprise of many of his colleagues, Taneyev resigned in 1889

Taneyev was known first and foremost as one of the great pianists of the late-19th century

leger HOLIDAYS

DISCOVER THE VERY BEST OF EUROPE

ON A FULLY ESCORTED COACH HOLIDAY

Everything is taken care of when you choose a holiday with Leger, with 100s of tours to choose from and prices from only £399pp.

EXPERIENCED **DRIVERS**

It starts with a local pick-up – there are hundreds of points across the UK. Your experienced driver takes it from there and will be with you every step of the way. Sharing tips and advice, there's always someone on hand! You're never alone on a Leger holiday...

LUXURY COACH **TRAVEL**

Travel by luxury coach with state-of-the-art Luxuria. Exclusive to Leger Holidays and the business class of coaches, sink into your deluxe, armchair-style seat, unwind with a vast choice of entertainment on your personal touch-screen TV, and enjoy more space around you with only 31 seats.

EXPERTLY PLANNED **ITINERARIES**

We'll cross the best Europe has to offer, so don't forget the cameras! Travelling by coach means you'll take in sights along the way that you wouldn't otherwise see... the rolling countryside, the spectacular landscapes, the traditional towns along the way – this is what the others miss!

KNOWLEDGEABLE **GUIDES**

From start to finish, we've got you covered... food, drinks, hotels, itineraries: sorted. Once there, our specially selected, knowledgeable guides ensure you won't miss a thing! Every trip, every historic detail... and by the end of your holiday, you'll be an expert too.

THE GOOD **COMPANY**

Travelling in the comfort of a group of like-minded people, you're in good company with Leger. Soak up the relaxing, sociable atmopshere, enjoy new experiences, share stories, create unforgettable memories, and you may even make friends for life!

"A combination of a first-rate tour guide, well organised coach crew, very full and informative itinerary, and great company made this tour one to remember" – **Geoff Mould**

Trustpilot
Rated **'Excellent'**

COMBINING STATE-OF-THE-ART COACH TRAVEL WITH SOME OF EUROPE'S MOST FASCINATINGLY UNIQUE HOTELS, THESE HOLIDAYS OFFER A TRULY SPECTACULAR EXPERIENCE.

01709 914 880

leger.co.uk/signature

ABTA ABTA No.V3582

T&Cs apply.

MULTI-AWARD WINNING COMPANY
BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2023

SCAN ME

018093

Benchmark occasion: (left) Taneyev (second right) with Leo Tolstoy (second left) and guests at Yasnaya Polyana, 1895; (below) the young Taneyev; (bottom) Wagner was a significant influence

GETTY

to find more time for composition – an ambition he had confessed to very few, including Tchaikovsky. For many, Taneyev hardly seemed to typify what was considered a creative temperament.

Generally diffident about showing his feelings, let alone his private passions – he was, not coincidentally, celibate – he once confessed to another close colleague and fellow composer, Arensky: 'I am always embarrassed to talk about my impressions: even in the theatre I do not like to sit with my acquaintances because I cannot bear to show that something has affected or created a strong impression on me.'

Sophia Tolstoy, wife of the author and a great admirer of Taneyev, noted how he only seemed to express himself fully when at the piano: 'He had a distinctive style. Sometimes, he was a philosopher of music but occasionally played with a passion, unexpected of the man who was otherwise phlegmatic and utterly unemotional. He was ironic, loved jokes, good food, and looked extremely prosaic.'

Taneyev's first public appearance as a composer had been in 1880 with his (as described on the tin) *Cantata for the unveiling of the Moscow Pushkin Memorial*. Neither this, nor even his official Op. 1 – the sombre and sometimes poignant cantata *John of Damascus* (1884) – prepared anyone for his long-gestated, painstakingly composed opera (or, as he preferred to call it, 'music trilogy') based on Aeschylus's *The Oresteia* trilogy of plays. It is a quite different world from his cantata: in Part I, the returning King Agamemnon is greeted by an almost rapturous chorus while beacons are lit, depicted with Wagnerian vividness by the orchestra.

Nor does Wagner's influence end there, notwithstanding its fierce denial by Taneyev's colleagues, several of whom made no secret of their hostility to the German composer. Although there is no romantic subplot as such, in Part II Electra is reunited with her brother Orestes in a duet of an almost incestuous passion that recalls *Die Walküre*'s Siegmund and Sieglinde. Furthermore, Taneyev's highly unusual (for a Russian composer) choice of a classic Greek drama for his subject was arguably equivalent to Wagner's use of ancient Norse legends.

And like Wagner, Taneyev took liberties with his source material. Although to a point he follows Aeschylus's original drama – all the murders are committed offstage and subsequently reported, with commentary by the chorus – he makes significant changes. Clytemnestra, unlike the unrepentant original character, suffers a Lady Macbeth-like guilt after killing her husband Agamemnon. And in the final scene, after Orestes is put on trial in Apollo's Temple for her murder, the chorus proclaims that rule of law and brotherhood will break the cycle of vengeance – a moral less to do with Aeschylus than with Taneyev's own liberal politics.

After its initial 1895 staging at the Mariinsky, *Oresteia* disappeared from the repertory as Taneyev refused to countenance the cuts to its three-hour length demanded by the Imperial Russian Opera's chief conductor, Eduard Nápravník. Yet Rimsky-Korsakov was struck by what he called 'its pages of unusual beauty and expressiveness'; and Mitrofan Belyayev, Russia's leading music publisher, was sufficiently impressed by *Oresteia* (and possibly by Rimsky-Korsakov's opinion of it) to offer publication. Taneyev accordingly revised the work with the assistance of a new friend, Glazunov, to whom he dedicated his next major work, his Symphony in C minor.

Published in 1901, this was the only symphony Taneyev officially acknowledged. Three preceding attempts, the first effectively a student work influenced by his teacher Tchaikovsky, have since been published, so making the C minor 'Symphony No. 4'. It is an impressive work, particularly strong in its first three movements. Though the opening sounds disconcertingly to modern ears like the opening of Shostakovich's 'Leningrad' Symphony, it soon takes a quite different path, reminiscent of Franck. The second movement has a striking nobility close to that of Taneyev's near-contemporary Elgar, a composer acclaimed and performed in Russia before the Revolution.

Taneyev had more confidence in his abilities in writing string quartets, first publishing in 1892 his beautiful and idiomatically written Quartet in B flat minor, Op. 4. Rather confusingly, this is still known as his 'No. 1', as his four previous attempts to write a quartet, when published some 35 years after his death, were given numbers consecutive to his last completed work in that

TANEYEV Life & Times

1856

LIFE: Sergei Taneyev is born on 25 November in the Russian city of Vladimir. He begins piano lessons at five, and at nine enters the Moscow Conservatory.

TIMES: ***The Treaty of Paris*** is signed between Russia and France, Britain and the Ottoman Empire, ending the three-year Crimean War and re-opening the Black Sea to trade.

1875

LIFE: Graduating with distinction as the winner of the Conservatory's Great Gold Medal, in December of the same year he gives the first Moscow performance of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto.

TIMES: ***General Dmitry Milyutin***'s widespread reforms to modernise the Russian military, which includes compulsory conscription for all classes but a reduction in the length of service, are formally made law.

1895

LIFE: He spends the first of two summers at Yasnaya Polyana, the home of ***Leo Tolstoy and his wife Sophia***. He enjoys playing chess with the author, but increasingly becomes the subject of Sophia's attentions.

TIMES: Thirteen people are killed when Russian soldiers break up a strike by 4,000 workers, staged in protest at low wages, at the Yaroslavl Great Manufacture linen company.

1889

LIFE: After the death of his mother ***Varvara***, a dynamic presence who has done much to influence his career, he resigns as director of the Conservatory, but remains there as a teacher.

TIMES: Chekhov's *The Wood Demon* is such a disaster at its premiere in Moscow that he flees in shame to the island of Sakhalin, 3,900 miles away. He later reworks the play as *Uncle Vanya*.

1905

LIFE: Amid the First Russian Revolution, he resigns as a teacher at the Conservatory in protest at the punishment meted out to students who have been involved in popular protest.

TIMES: Russia incurs significant losses as it suffers a humiliating defeat in the two-year Russo-Japanese War, badly denting national pride and resulting in growing domestic unrest.

1915

LIFE: Weakened by pneumonia contracted while attending the funeral of fellow composer Scriabin, he himself dies of heart failure two months later, on 19 June, aged 58.

TIMES: In the weeks leading up to his marriage to Bella Rosenfeld in Vitebsk, ***Marc Chagall*** paints *The Birthday*, in which he depicts himself floating above his wife-to-be in a state of ecstasy.

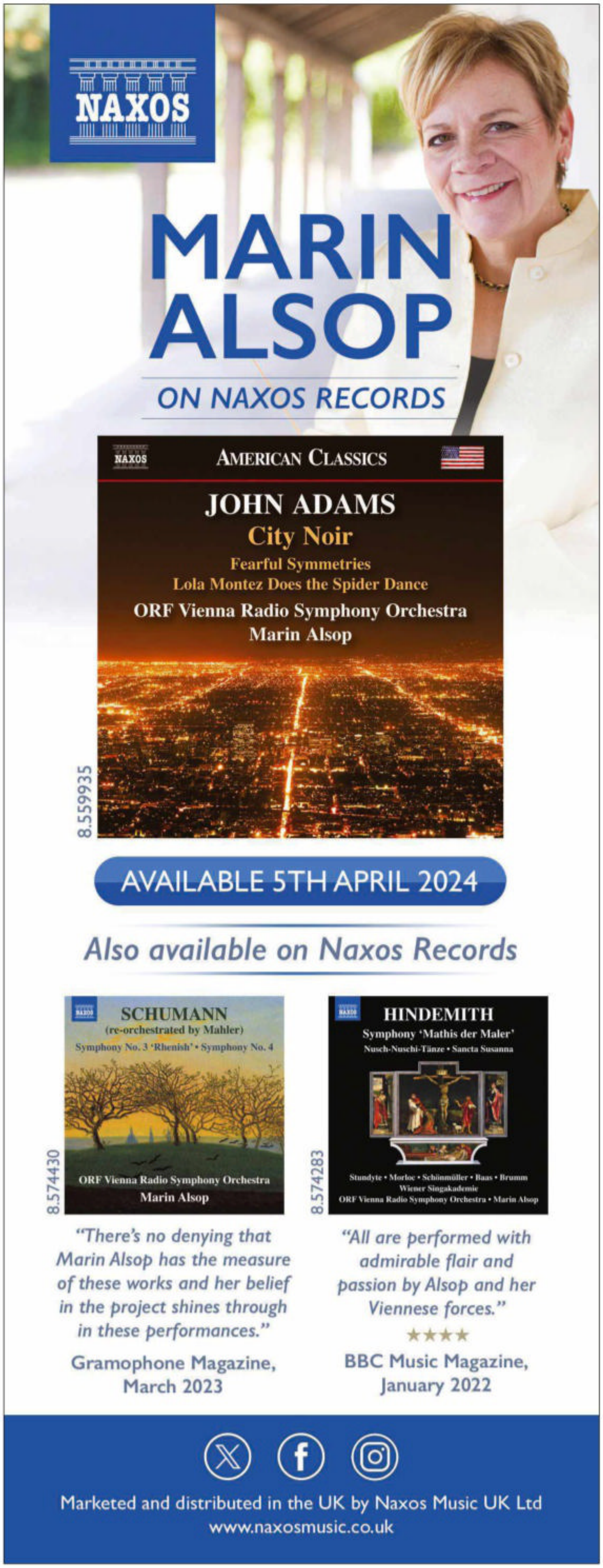
medium: No. 6 in B flat major, Op. 19. The best of these, along with his masterful two String Quintets and the wonderful works involving his own instrument, the piano – particularly the Piano Quintet of 1911 – give lie to the still repeated canard, first published by musicologist Gerald Abraham in 1936, that 'nearly everything Taneief wrote seems to have been conceived as "abstract music" for no special medium'.

Taneyev was equally adept as a songwriter – indeed, he is recognised as one of Russia's finest. Those from his final decade are well worth investigating. *Ten Romances from Ellis's Immortelles* (1908) includes 'Menuet' (greatly admired by Prokofiev) which, like an Edgar Allan Poe story, switches disconcertingly from the grace of a courtly dance to chilling horror. His final three sets of songs all set

Taneyev was equally adept as a songwriter – indeed, recognised as one of Russia's finest

verse by the Romantic Russian poet Yakov Polonsky: in Op. 34, 'The last conversation' depicts a painful parting, the music full of a passion Taneyev surely knew but did not feel able to express in his daily life.

It is perhaps unfortunate for Taneyev's reputation that his last work, completed just months before his death aged 58, was his cantata *At the Reading of a Psalm*. A lugubriously portentous setting of Khomyakov's poem – a reflection on Psalm 50 promoting Taneyev's favourite theme of brotherhood – its serious tone and formidable display of fugal textures, including a challenging triple fugue for the chorus, prompted many to claim it his masterpiece. With his Op. 1 cantata, it appears neatly and rather forbiddingly to bookend his oeuvre – irresistibly suggesting its Alpha and Omega – leading many casual listeners to assume that between them they summarise Taneyev's career. But to explore no further would be to miss a good deal of sunshine, charm and enchantment to be found in the best of that shy composer's other work.


NAXOS
MARIN ALSOP
ON NAXOS RECORDS
NAXOS
AMERICAN CLASSICS
JOHN ADAMS
City Noir
Fearful Symmetries
Lola Montez Does the Spider Dance
ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra
Marin Alsop
8.559935
AVAILABLE 5TH APRIL 2024
Also available on Naxos Records
SCHUMANN
(re-orchestrated by Mahler)
Symphony No. 3 'Rhenish' • Symphony No. 4
ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra
Marin Alsop
8.574430
HINDEMITH
Symphony 'Mathis der Maler'
Nusch-Nuschi-Tänze • Sancta Susanna
Stundyte • Morloc • Schönmüller • Baas • Brumm
Wiener Singakademie
ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra • Marin Alsop
8.574283
"There's no denying that Marin Alsop has the measure of these works and her belief in the project shines through in these performances."
Gramophone Magazine, March 2023
"All are performed with admirable flair and passion by Alsop and her Viennese forces."
★★★★
BBC Music Magazine, January 2022
Marketed and distributed in the UK by Naxos Music UK Ltd
www.naxosmusic.co.uk

harmonia mundi
BENJAMIN BRITTEN
VIOLIN CONCERTO
AND CHAMBER WORKS
ISABELLE FAUST . JAKUB HRŮŠA
BENJAMIN BRITTEN VIOLIN CONCERTO CHAMBER WORKS
BORIS FAUST | ALEXANDER MELNIKOV
SYMPHONIEORCHESTER DES BAYERISCHEN RUNDFUNKS
JAKUB HRŮŠA | ISABELLE FAUST
Photo: © Astrid Ackermann | BR
HMM 902668
SYMPHONIEORCHESTER DES BAYERISCHE RUNDFUNKS
ALEXANDER MELNIKOV • BORIS FAUST
After Berg, Schoenberg, Bartók and Stravinsky, Isabelle Faust now tackles Britten with Jakub Hrůša and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, revealing a little-known facet of the British composer. This concerto, highly personal in its language, combines drama with humour, seriousness with satire, in music of overwhelming emotional depth. The programme is completed by early chamber works.
Centre national de la musique
CO-PRODUCTION WITH
BR KLASSIK
www.harmoniamundi.com

Claudio Monteverdi

Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda

To mark our 400th issue, ***Paul Riley*** turns the clock back 400 years to when Venetians were thrilling to the novel sounds of a knightly battle

The composer

Claudio Monteverdi was in his mid-50s at the time of composing *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* and 11 years into his appointment as *maestro di capella* at the Basilica of San Marco in Venice. Before his move there in 1613, the Cremona-born composer had spent 22 years serving in the court of Duke Vincenzo I Gonzaga in Mantua, a period that produced works such as his opera *Orfeo* (1607) and the Vespers of 1610. His later years would see his prodigious output slow down a little, and in 1632 he was admitted to the priesthood, but a final flurry of works preceded his death in 1643.

Building a Library is broadcast on Radio 3 at 3.30pm each Saturday as part of *Record Review*. A highlights podcast is available on BBC Sounds.

The work

Anyone visiting Venice today with deep pockets and a reservation at the Danieli Hotel might not necessarily know that in 1624 the then Palazzo was host to the birth of a remarkable musical moment. A theorbo's throw from the Doge's Palace and Basilica of San Marco, it was home to Monteverdi's patron Girolamo Mocenigo; and for the carnival celebrations, San Marco's illustrious *maestro di capella* had something special up his sleeve. With *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* he was, he declared, 'the author of the first experiment and of the first convincing example of a style indispensable to music'.

In a nutshell, he claimed to have rediscovered the 'agitated style' described by Plato 2,000 years earlier. Love and passion were already well expressed in music, he contended, but not so music's ability to articulate anger and war. And while – launching a fusillade of rapid-fire notes, whooshing scales, trumpet-like fanfares and all-purpose clatter – the 'stile concitato' soon caught on among other composers, Monteverdi was at pains to take the proprietorial credit.

The catalyst for his experimentation was a portion of Tasso's mighty epic poem *Gerusalemme Liberata* (Jerusalem Liberated). Retelling the story of the siege of Jerusalem in 1099, it was published exactly a decade after the Battle of Lepanto (1571) when Venetian forces and their allies had scored a crushing victory over the Ottoman empire. Its tale of the Crusades still had topical overtones. Monteverdi's interests, nonetheless, were more specific. 'In Tasso's account of the battle between Tancredi and Clorinda I found the conflicting passions that I wanted to set to music: war, supplication and even death'.

For all its warlike derring-do, the 'agitated style' was not to be confined to the battlefield, however. It could be a useful tool in exploring the battle of the sexes – its conquests and tribulations. To underline the point, when, some 14 year later, *Il Combattimento* finally made it into print, it was as one of the substantial set pieces in Monteverdi's Eighth Book of Madrigals, the *Madrigali Guerrieri et Amorosi* (Madrigals of Love and War).

'I found the conflicting passions I wanted to set to music: war, supplication and even death'

But what sort of a work is it? It's not a madrigal in the generally accepted sense. Nor is it really an operatic 'scena', since the events are almost entirely experienced through the reportage of a narrator, relegating the protagonists themselves to the briefest of walk-on parts – think perhaps of those moments in a Bach Passion where the Evangelist's narration is momentarily interrupted by someone singing a single sentence of direct speech.

In a sense, *Il Combattimento* makes up its own rules. In a heated spat with the composer and theorist Giovanni Artusi, Monteverdi had already championed the taking of liberties. Music, he declared, was the servant of the poetry, not the other way

round; and anything that served the words was thus legitimate.

In the case of *Il Combattimento*, that 'anything' didn't just rely on music. The story concerns a Christian knight (Tancredi) who one night comes upon a Saracen opponent – in fact, it's Clorinda, the idealised object of his love, but unrecognisable in her armour. They fight. Clorinda admits to complicity in the destruction of a siege tower. Tancredi, aroused to anger, fatally wounds the stranger, who asks for Christian baptism. And only as he raises the visor of her helmet does he discover the devastating consequences of his actions.

It's a graphic tale graphically told, but in theory Monteverdi had clipped his own wings by forgoing the opportunities for elaborate engagement between the two combatants. The work's impact depends on the skills of the narrator, the novelty of the 'stile concitato', and, for that first performance, one more element: *Il Combattimento* must count as one of the first ever pop-up performances.

Back in the Palazzo carnival, festivities are in full swing. But the guests are about to be ambushed. Monteverdi instructs the

GETTY

three singers to emerge from the corner of the room: 'Clorinda armed and on foot is followed by Tancredi on a horse. They're to respond to the narrator's words with steps and gestures observing diligently those measures, and the instrumentalists' sounds'. Those instrumentalists, moreover, are on the controlling hook too. Monteverdi takes great care to explain

Warring factions: (above) Ali McGregor (Clorinda), Angus Wood (Narrator) and Han Lim (Tancredi) battle it out at Sydney Opera House, 2004; (left) the siege of Jerusalem in 1099

how his desired effects are to be realised – including a novel use of pizzicato, instructions for Tancredi's cantering horse, and how the string players' bows are to be deployed at key moments. The instrumentalists, it seems, were initially resistant, and Monteverdi had to insist that they played everything as written.

His persistence paid off. At the death of Clorinda, now suitably baptised and proclaiming 'Heaven opens, I go in peace', the audience 'appeared to be in a pool of tears', Monteverdi recorded. 'And they applauded because never before had they seen or heard the like of this vocal work.' Unique in so many ways, did the carnival revellers but know it, *Il Combattimento* was signalling a staging post en route to the Venetian Republic's imminent love affair with opera itself.

Turn the page to discover our recommended recordings of Monteverdi's Il Combattimento

Living the moment: conductor Rinaldo Alessandrini stirs up Monteverdi's drama

An enthralling confrontation

The best recording

Rinaldo Alessandrini *(conductor)*

Raffaele Giordani, Monica Piccinini, Matteo Bellotto; Concerto Italiano *Naïve OP3058*

Trust 2017's celebrations of the 450th anniversary of Monteverdi's birth to complicate things. Up until then, Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini's crack cohort of native musicians, had made just one recording of *Il Combattimento*. Now there are two: the newcomer embedded in a programme devoted to night, love, and war; its predecessor in a set exploring the Eighth Book of Madrigals. And to choose between them is no easy matter. While Alessandrini's first thoughts have an edgy freshness, nearly two decades on the gain in depth is inescapable, even if some of the edginess is less pronounced.

Any recording stands or falls by its narrator. And if Clorinda didn't have the good fortune to repent and die – thus attracting a more-than-passing interest – the title roles prove less important

Alessandrini's achievement is to treat every note, every silence, with the same care

than both the continuo and the small band of strings charged with bringing Monteverdi's 'experiments' to life. His is a theatre of the mind, its pictures and dramas created in sound. And given the lean resources, there's almost nowhere to hide – which is perhaps why Monteverdi was so explicit in his instructions as to how the piece should be performed.

Those instructions give any would-be interpreter an invaluable starting point, but so steeped is Alessandrini in the Italian 17th century that he scarcely needs them. He breathes the Monteverdian air unmediated. In Raffaele Giordani's narrator he has the ideal ally: there's a vocal vibrancy that can spit out 'l'ira accendi' (whip up their fury) with a terrifying snarl yet caress the moment when recitative breaks into song, disclosing an almost enchanted surrender to night's embrace – the sinfonia preceding it gorgeously exudes a spacious enveloping velvety mystery. Dramatic moments can look after themselves, but Alessandrini's achievement in this later recording is

Three other great recordings

René Jacobs (conductor)

There's something immensely organic about the way René Jacobs unfolds the narrative's ineluctable trajectory in his version recorded in 2000. And for a conductor so often associated with a certain operatic flamboyance, some of the 'agitato' moments prove unexpectedly genteel. Fluent yet with real heft, Victor Torres's storytelling similarly tends more to the thoughtful than the excitable. With beefed-up instrumental resources, Jacobs paints in colourful, sumptuous broad strokes. Kobie van Rensburg is a mellifluous, aristocratic Tancredi, while Salomé Halle's dying Clorinda is utterly heart-stopping. *(Harmonia Mundi HMC 901 736/7)*

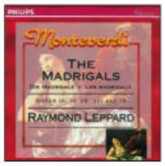
William Christie (conductor)

Les Arts Florissants' 1992 recording wears its years lightly. Christie sets out his stall right from the start, inspirating the strings' chords that so often can sound rather mundane. It's symptomatic of a characteristically theatrically charged reading that conjures fearsome instrumental electricity during the initial fight and unbearable suspense as Clorinda's unmasking nears. Baritone Nicolas Rivenq's narrator is strongly

characterised and textually responsive throughout. *(Harmonia Mundi HMA1951426)*

Emmanuelle Haïm (conductor)
Naughty but nice! Baroque specialist Emmanuelle Haïm raised a few eyebrows in purist circles when she enlisted tenor Rolando Villazón to sing the role of the narrator. And although he's sometimes more Giuseppe Verdi than Monteverdi (plus a pinch of Puccini), it's hard not to surrender to his ringing declamation and golden tones. With Patrizia Ciofi and Topi Lehtipuu completing the line-up, this 2005 release is more operatic than most, but the instrumental underpinning is taut, the continuo expertly judged and Haïm's dramatic instincts unfailingly compelling. *(Erato 363 3502)*

And one to avoid...



With its over-egged realisation, ponderous tempos, sometimes cumbersome contributions from the English Chamber Orchestra and a harpsichord continuo that could have liberated Jerusalem all by itself, Raymond Leppard's 1970 recording proclaims its guiding spirit in every bar. But he was a pioneer whose efforts helped to popularise the repertoire, and if today the performance seems something of a period piece itself, his intentions were honest, his interventions well meant.

to treat every note, every silence, with the same care. And how perfectly he modulates the dramatic intensity between the second round of fighting and the fatal blow – Giordani's howls of 'Ahi vista! Ahi conoscenza!' (Unhappy sight! Unhappy recognition!) are blood-curdling.

Throughout, the instrumentalists are caught up in the thick of things, enriching the tragedy every bit as much as Monica Piccinini's ill-fated Clorinda and Matteo Bellotto's Tancredi. The story-telling grips; the emotional traumas dig deep; and everywhere, Alessandrini's direction enthrals and illuminates.

LORRAINE WAUTERS, TORI AVA, GETTY

Into battle: Hespèrion XXI march with Janequin; (below) Monica Huggett tackles Biber

Continue the journey...

We suggest works to explore after Monteverdi's Il Combattimento

Though Monteverdi may have proudly claimed the credit for reinventing the 'agitated style' in music, the subject – and lively depiction – of battles had been popular for some time. For instance, from the 1580s we have *La battaglia* by Monteverdi's Venetian forebear ***Andrea Gabrieli***. Scored for eight wind instruments, it's a jaunty affair – all triumphant fanfares rather than the cut and thrust of combat. **(The King's Consort** *Hyperion CDD22072***)**

Janequin's 1528 *La Guerre* set a precedent for composers across Europe

The French liked to celebrate a good fight too, as evidenced by ***Clément Janequin***'s 1528 *La Guerre*, which raises a goblet to Francis I's victory over the assembled forces of Duke Ercole Sforza of Milan at the Battle of Marignano 13 years earlier. In this instance, five voices plus instrumental accompaniment call us to arms in the first half, before we enter into the fray in the second, with all manner of drum beats, staccato phrases and rolled Rs aping the sounds of the battlefield. **(Hespèrion XXI, La Capella Reial de Catalunya/Jordi Savall** *Alia Vox AVSA9925***)**

Janequin's work set a precedent for composers across Europe – including England's ***William Byrd*** who, in the early 1580s lauded victory over the Irish in *The Battell*. Byrd conjures up the sounds of battle – including English trumpets and Irish bagpipes – on a solo keyboard, with special effects. It's rather ingenious. **(Davitt Moroney (virginal)** *Hyperion CDA66558***)**

Heading forward a century, ***Heinrich Biber***'s *Battalia à 10* of 1673 is a riot of invention. Left-hand pizzicato, out-of-tune playing and paper placed beneath the strings to create the sound of a snare drum are all part of the mix in the German's eight-movement work for chamber ensemble. Intriguingly, however, the exact inspiration for its composition remains obscure. **(Monica Huggett (conductor/violin); The European Community Baroque Orchestra** *Channel CCS4392***)**

Finally, for a different take on Tasso's poem *Gerusalemme Liberata*, try ***Jean-Baptiste Lully***'s 1686 opera *Armide*. The title character is a sorceress who swears to take ultimate revenge on the knight Rinaldo, whose Christian invaders have recently been defeated... but when she has the opportunity to do so, finds herself smitten by him. **(Marie-Adeline Henry et al; Les Talens Lyriques/Christophe Rousset** *Aparté AP135***)**

Reviews

Recordings and books rated by expert critics

Welcome

We were excited to get our hands on the world-premiere recording of *Fausto*, Louise Bertin's 1831 operatic retelling of the Faust story. Given just three performances in the year of its composition, the work then vanished for nearly two centuries! Now the adventurous Bru Zane label has stepped intothe breach. But has it been worth the wait? Find out on page 120…

Elsewhere, our reviews section is packed with eye-catching new releases including a live Mahler 6 from Rattle and the Bavarians; an impactful new Rachmaninov *All-Night Vigil;* and Philip Glass's *Cocteau Trilogy,* arranged for two pianos and performed by the Labèque sisters. Glass is one of many contemporary composers to feature this month – others include Rebecca Dale, Michael Finnissy and John Corigliano.

Steve Wright *Acting reviews editor*

This month's critics

John Allison, Terry Blain, Kate Bolton-Porciatti, Garry Booth, Geoff Brown, Michael Church, Christopher Cook, Martin Cotton, Christopher Dingle, Misha Donat, Jessica Duchen, Rebecca Franks, George Hall, Claire Jackson, Berta Joncus, John-Pierre Joyce, Nicholas Kenyon, Ashutosh Khandekar, Erik Levi, Natasha Loges, Andrew McGregor, David Nice, Roger Nichols, Amelia Parker, Ingrid Pearson, Steph Power, Paul Riley, Jan Smaczny, Roger Thomas, Sarah Urwin Jones, Kate Wakeling, Alexandra Wilson

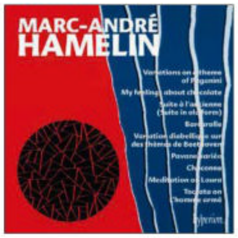
KEY TO STAR RATINGS

★★★★★	Outstanding
★★★★	Excellent
★★★	Good
★★	Disappointing
★	Poor

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

Revelatory adventures across the keyboard

Claire Jackson marvels at the skill, flair and guts evident in Marc-André Hamelin's new recording of his own compositions



Marc-André Hamelin

New Piano Works
Marc-André Hamelin (piano)
Hyperion CDA68308 74:00 mins

The jaunty theme from Paganini's Caprice No. 24 has long provided a musical diving board: composers from Brahms to Beamish have plunged the melody beyond the violinist's own brilliant variations. Rachmaninov's rhapsodic experiment furthered the work's pianistic possibilities; that dramatic lyricism is matched by Marc-André Hamelin's grittier 2011 set, recorded for the first time here by the composer. The original melody is sharpened by rapid development; the tonality is ultimately discoloured by cluster chords and flitting harmonies.

The seemingly *galant* beginning to No. 5 quickly moves into a thrilling cross-rhythmic chase, opening No. 6 in a haze – interrupted by well-known, fragmented snippets, rather like tuning an analogue radio. Needless to say, this endlessly fascinating collection is played with style and incredible subtlety.

There's wit, too, in the clear references to Rachmaninov and Liszt's *Grandes études de Paganini*. In other hands this music could easily sound like a pub quiz music round, but Hamelin's structure, though fluid, is always carefully considered.

The Pavane variations are similarly compelling. Based on the theme derived from Thoinot Arbeau's chanson 'Belle qui tiens ma vie' (recognisable to some as the tune featured within Warlock's *Capriol Suite*), they too benefit from Hamelin's unconstricted approach. Once neatly set on its stall, the melodic material is almost immediately overturned: No. 2 is dream-like, No. 5 ripples into a tirade

Keys to enlightenment: Marc-André Hamelin leads us on a tour of his own engaging repertoire

SIM CANETTY-CLARKE

that becomes its successor. The drama is stopped abruptly by a Feldman-like chorale, echoed again in an otherwise exultant No. 9 (Hamelin has recorded Feldman's spacious *For Bunita Marcus*). I couldn't hum the original theme by this point if my life depended on it.

Such intensely varied, virtuosic music naturally requires technical skill, interpretative flair and, frankly, guts. It's easy to see why Hamelin is sought after by piano competitions – the 2014 Pavane variations were commissioned by the ARD International Music Competition in Germany, followed by the *Toccata on 'L'homme armé'* (2016), which was a set piece for the 2017 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. This small-but-perfectly-formed miniature is dense, notes splattering across the keyboard as the work's central melody vaguely evokes a warlike early modern song.

It's one of four compact pieces featured on the album;

This endlessly fascinating collection is played with style and incredible subtlety

the *Meditation on Laura*, from 2011, is sparse and twinkly, as is *My feelings about chocolate* (2014), which furthers some of the minimalistic ideas hinted at during the variations. The sensory experience of a sweet treat is beautifully translated into pools of sound, rather like the use of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* for Galaxy's 1992 'Why have cotton when you can have silk?' advertising campaign.

Hamelin's interest in mining thematic veins continues with 2013's Barcarolle and Chaconne. In the latter, a musical cipher provides the impetus to a series that is concurrently pensive and quietly playful, simmering but never bubbling over, with every whispered secret beautifully kept. The Barcarolle expressively swirls unlikely colours, marbling harmonies but keeping a tonal centre always firmly in view.

I don't recall ever giving a recording the full ten stars. But then, I hadn't heard Hamelin play his own work.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Performer's notes
Marc-André Hamelin

Why record an album of your own compositions?
I have had the good fortune to have had some of my own musical scores published by Edition Peters. I'm not publishing these things just for myself to play – I want others to play them as well. But a published score on its own won't mean much unless they can get to hear the music as well. Then they can decide whether they want to spend time with it.

Do you think it's important for performers to try their hand at composing?
I wouldn't expect all performers to be composers, but I think they should at least try their hand at it. There are several benefits – it teaches you to take composers' intentions much more seriously, and can also help you make better interpretative decisions. If you compose, you are better placed to feel at least a little like the composers of the works you perform.

***My feelings about chocolate*: a great subject for a piano work. Tell us more...**
My German manager is a bit of a collector, and had long been asking me for a manuscript of something I'd written. One day I was in a store and saw a German chocolate assortment in a nice wooden box, and it was named *praline-sonata* – chocolate sonata! So I resolved to write a short piece and to present the manuscript to him in the box. What emerged were some rather sultry, jazzy harmonies, and some markings that have been likened to those of Erik Satie – such as 'let's taste everything in this box', 'mmm, there are still a few left', and the final 'to hell with the diet... all gone!'.

Orchestral

ORCHESTRAL CHOICE

Evocative Debussy and spellbinding Stravinsky

The Orchestre de Paris showcases three richly colourful ballets with success, writes ***Erik Levi***

Puppet master: Klaus Mäkelä relishes the varied world of *Petrushka*

Stravinsky • Debussy

Stravinsky: Petrushka (1947 version); **Debussy:** Jeux; Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune
Orchestre de Paris/Klaus Mäkelä
Decca 4870146 64 mins

Few ballet scores manage to encapsulate such a varied and arresting range of emotions as *Petrushka*. But the sharp juxtapositions in Stravinsky's 1947 version of the score, between the vibrant and colourful external world of the Shrovetide fair and the cruel and disturbing internal love triangle of the puppets, also pose a huge challenge for interpreters, the relative success of a performance depending to a great extent on an ability to respond to each twist and turn in the scenario with razor-sharp precision and incisive imagination.

Klaus Mäkelä and the Orchestre de Paris certainly pass the test with flying colours when it comes to delineating the more disturbing elements of the music. Their interpretation of the second tableau, with Bertrand Chamayou delivering a miraculously vivid account of the virtuosic piano part, is spellbinding, as is their depiction of Petrushka's demise and ghostly reappearance at the end of the work.

Mäkelä is less effective in projecting charm in the various allusions to fairground music, and seductiveness in the Ballerina's waltz in the third tableau. I also miss that bustling excitement and expectancy of the crowds at the work's opening and at the start of the fourth tableau.

> Enjoy the outstanding orchestral playing and sumptuous engineering

Yet despite these caveats, there's much to enjoy here, particularly given the outstanding orchestral playing and sumptuous engineering. I was particularly impressed with the gorgeous timbres of Mäkelä's wonderfully evocative account of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, and the performance of the incredibly subtle and emotionally elusive *Jeux* is engaging and dramatically convincing.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

Bacewicz • Enescu • Ysaÿe

Bacewicz: Concerto for String Orchestra; **Enescu:** Octet for String Orchestra; **Ysaÿe:** Harmonies du Soir
Sinfonia of London/John Wilson
Chandos CHSA5325 66:38 mins

Even in the context of Grażyna Bacewicz's hugely striking output of music for strings, her Concerto for String Orchestra stands as one of this Polish composer's major works. Dating from the fateful year of 1948, when Stalinism tightened its grip on music everywhere behind the Iron Curtain, the music treads a cleverly uncompromised path, saved perhaps by the accessibility of its neo-classicism. At its centre is a searing slow movement, rich and haunting, but the rest of the work crackles with energy, and the Sinfonia of London (at times divided into 17 parts) under John Wilson brings biting attack to a very polished performance.

No matter how good these strings sound, though, there is something less satisfying about their performance of Enescu's Octet. Perhaps it was pragmatism that led the composer, late in life, to sanction performances of this masterpiece by string orchestras, but such an arrangement skews the music and detracts from the genius of a work really best heard as chamber music – expanding things for full orchestra undermines the point of the piece. Just as giving Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* to a string orchestra smooths things out, here one feels the loss of the striving energy that would be given off by only eight players.

Completing this album of works by composers who were also violin virtuosos, Eugène Ysaÿe's *Harmonies du Soir* makes a very welcome appearance (this long neglected work was not recorded until 2012), as well as a neat connection: idolised by Enescu, the Belgian returned the favour by dedicating one of his six solo violin sonatas to his younger Romanian colleague. Scored for string quartet and string orchestra, this highly perfumed music receives an exquisite performance.
John Allison

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

CPE Bach

Hamburg symphonies and fantasias

Marcin Świątkiewicz (harpsichord); Arte dei Suonatori

BIS BIS2459 84:46 mins

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's vivid and innovative music used to be written off as 'the all-too-easy surprises of a style where anything can happen'. But in the years since period-instrument groups came to the fore, these thrilling Hamburg symphonies have become staples of their repertory, all the way from Trevor Pinnock's English Concert recording of 1979, one of their first for Archiv, to the new Orchestra of the 18th Century set welcomed by Paul Riley here in the February issue.

So, what can a new version add? In the case of this stylish account by the ten players of the Polish ensemble Arte dei Suonatori, a fancy title *(Instrumental Theatre of Affects)* and quite a lot from the director, Marcin Świątkiewicz: several solo keyboard fantasias take the length to a generous 84 minutes and prompt the instruction (which I've never come across before) that in SACD the last track starting after 80 minutes may not play on its own.

I'm not sure that placing the very inward solo keyboard fantasias alongside the extrovert symphonies really works, as the sonic picture is so different, but Świątkiewicz chooses his fantasias and his instruments well, and plays them with panache; we might not guess that one of them is actually his own Bachian improvisation.

Unusually, the six 'Hamburg' Symphonies are reordered, and while the one minor-key piece (No. 5) makes an apt start, and Symphony No. 1 in G major an excellent finish, a keyboard moment might have helped to bridge the lurch of keys from B flat (No. 2) to A major (No. 4).

The lively small-scale forces help the pungency of the sound but don't inhibit lyricism, and the jagged rhythms are never too brittle. The amazing originality of these punchy pieces (like the obsessive sevenths of No. 2's *Presto* finale) never cease to surprise. *Nicholas Kenyon*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Richard Baker

The Tyranny of Fun; Crank; Motet II; Angelus; Learning to Fly; To Keep a True Lent: Hommagesquisse; Hwyl fawr ffrindiau

CHROMA Ensemble/Richard Baker; Birmingham Contemporary Music Group/Finnegan Downie Dear et al

NMC Recordings NMCD275 60:37 mins

This taut, adventurous disc offers a welcome showcase of British composer Richard Baker. These eight works demonstrate his gifts as a composer of music that fizzes with a piercing, complex wit.

The opening track, *Crank*, scored for diatonic music box across multiple pulses, sets the tone for the album as a whole in its blend of the playful and unsettling. Such discomforting mischief continues in the disc's title work. *The Tyranny of Fun* takes flight from George Balanchine's ballet *La valse* and Ravel's particular attraction to Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Masque of the Red Death*. While Ravel's source material for *La valse* was the Viennese waltz, Baker here looks to the dance music of New York's super-clubs of the 1970s and early '80s, transposing Poe's 'red death' to the cultural moment just before the AIDS epidemic. The result is a mercurial and electrifying piece of music, given a particularly poised performance from the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.

Baker continues his deft political commentary in *Motet II*. Composed in response to the murder of George Floyd, the work was created amid the composer's pandemic isolation in rural Wales and draws astutely on Welsh folksong and the speech patterns of a BBC Cymru news item about racist graffiti in a small village in North Wales. Other highlights include *Angelus*, a magical piece for two percussionists that explores panic and calm, and a splendid concertante for basset clarinet and ensemble, *Learning to Fly*, which features a terrific performance from soloist Oliver Janes.

This is an invigorating and imaginative disc, expertly performed and recorded, which showcases the work of a major talent. *Kate Wakeling*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Vivid virtuosity: John Wilson brings crackling energy to Bacewicz

Beethoven

Symphony No. 3; 'Coriolan' Overture

Budapest Festival Orchestra/ Iván Fischer

Channel Classics CCSSA46524 60:38 mins

The 'Eroica' Symphony and the 'Coriolan' Overture make for an apt coupling: like the symphony's funeral-march second movement, the overture is in Beethoven's characteristically dramatic key of C minor, and both pieces end with hesitant scraps of their main melody fading away into the distance. The overture is a piece which grabs you by the throat from the very first bar and never lets go. Iván Fischer and his Budapest Festival Orchestra produce a performance of white-hot intensity, but it's a pity that once the dramatic initial chords are over Fischer allows the strings to let go of the final note of their quiet phrases too soon: Beethoven clearly marks the note in question *tenuto* each time, suggesting it should carry greater weight.

The opening bars of the 'Eroica's slow movement in Fischer's performance are not quite hushed enough to convey the *sotto voce* effect Beethoven wanted, but Fischer's slow tempo for the piece as a whole – fairly unfashionable these days – brings out its tragedy with particular intensity. Only in the middle section, where the music emerges into the daylight of the major mode and the woodwinds give out delicate descending scales, does the pace seem a shade ponderous. In the finale, the impulsive *accelerando* at the end of the forceful march-like episode is not, perhaps, wholly convincing, but this is generally a fine and well-recorded performance, with a welcome degree of expressive flexibility in such moments as the opening movement's gentle second subject. *Misha Donat*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Mahler

Symphony No. 6

Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra/Simon Rattle

BR Klassik 900217 81 mins

Simon Rattle made his first recording of the apocalyptic Sixth Symphony 36 years ago with his City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, a partnership which

MARCO BORGGREVE, ALEX INGRAM

transformed the British concert scene. His latest thoughts on the work usher in his new reign at the helm of the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (the Berlin Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestra came in between: quite a track record). It's not substantially different: marginally quicker, but the opening movement remains grandiose rather than propulsively energetic as Mahler asks until the end. The *Andante* – once again placed second, rather than what has always struck me as a more structurally convincing third – favours colour over line, though the spurts of the *Scherzo* are more appropriate.

There's no doubt that the Munich-based orchestra is among the best in the world today, making many of the finest sounds possible, from shrieking woodwind and brilliant trumpets through to the Kraken-like heavings in the depths.

But what lifts this up among the very best Sixth Symphony recordings is the finale – this time perfectly paced through its demanding half-hour span of march mania, baleful warnings and brief optimisms. The axe-like thuds which knock down our hero twice, captured by the recording with awesome presence, are followed by the clearest of string welters; the brass carry out the final funeral rites with appropriate presence. You wouldn't know this was taken from live performances – if anything, the hall acoustics sound as if studio reverb were added, which is obviously not the case – but the frissons in this crucial denouement might suggest as much. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Symphonic master: Simon Rattle has made a triumphant return to Mahler's Sixth

R Strauss

Josephs Legende
Staatskapelle Halle/Fabrice Bollon
Naxos 8.574551 71:32 mins

Strauss's ballet *Josephs Legende* had everything going for it – a scenario by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, choreography by Mikhail Fokine and a starring role for Léonide Massine in a production by Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russes. But Strauss got bored with the story of the Old Testament Joseph and his attempted seduction by Potiphar's wife. After dragging his feet for nearly two years, he finally cobbled together some material from old sketchbooks and wrapped it in a huge orchestral score. The premiere in Paris in May 1914 and subsequent performances in London passed off well enough, but then the First World War intervened and 'Joseph's Legend' was mostly forgotten.

This release marks a welcome opportunity to reassess the music. Despite Strauss's claim to have 'rejuvenated' the dance form, his ballet clearly lacks inspiration. The music drives the narrative forward in only a handful of numbers. There is also very little real originality. Many passages could have come straight out of (or else been cut from) Strauss's earlier operas, *Salome* and *Elektra*. That said, the theme associated with Joseph is dextrously developed and has a folkish, pastoral quality.

What makes *Josephs Legende* and this recording special, however, is Strauss's striking orchestral mastery. The ballet is scored for enormous forces, including four flutes, five clarinets, four trumpets, four trombones, four harps, piano, off-stage organ and celesta. Much of the writing – such as the rapid string figures, rhythmic shifts and contrapuntal patterns – is also highly complex. Halle's Staatskapelle and their conductor Fabrice Bollon rise to these challenges in a performance that is bold and daring, with just the right amount of lyrical tenderness in the score's more reflective moments. *John-Pierre Joyce*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Stravinsky

Firebird Suite; Petrushka Suite
Philharmonia Orchestra/ Santtu-Matias Rouvali
Signum SIGCD856 65:07 mins

Who wants *Petrushka* without the ghost? It makes no sense to offer all but a few bars of the complete ballet up to the point where the puppets scuffle behind the curtains, Petrushka is killed by his love rival and returns to haunt the scene. Stravinsky, who provided a 'concert ending' to kick the Masqueraders off the stage (and no doubt win instant applause), actually recorded this oddity twice – the second time nominally as his amanuensis Robert Craft conducted – but beyond the era of record sides, saving a few crucial minutes is absurd. And someone forgot to tell the recording's authoritative annotator Marina Frolova-Walker what was (or wasn't) going on.

Do the performances transcend the limitation? Sadly not. I always wondered about Rouvali's lack of interest in true theatricality (as opposed to symphonic drama – his Mahler Second turned out to be a surprise success). The *Firebird* Suite is the longer 1945 one, giving us the *Firebird*'s oriental Supplications and the Princesses's dance with the golden apples in addition to the six movements selected in 1919. The French sophistications of the first half are beautifully played, but all behind a scrim, and the stakes aren't sufficiently raised for the Infernal Dance. The Berceuse is stretched from dream to torpor, and the eccentricities of Rouvali begin in the finale, continuing with at least half a dozen absurd pauses in *Petrushka* (the last to try and justify the unsatisfactory ending). The stars are the orchestra, with outstanding sonorities from flute to tuba, and the recording. It sounds gorgeous, but simply doesn't catch fire. *David Nice*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

GETTY

BACKGROUND TO…
Mahler's *Symphony No. 6*

Quite apart from its powerful, often ominous music, Mahler's Sixth Symphony has two main talking points. Firstly, there's much debate about the correct order of the two inner movements: the composer originally placed the *Scherzo* second and the *Andante* third, but later revised this decision, and to this day there are arguments about the correct order. Then there are the *Finale*'s famous hammer blows: Mahler wanted these to be 'brief and mighty, but dull in resonance', and the search for the right sound has exercised conductors ever since. Wooden mallets, sledgehammers and large bass drums are commonly employed.

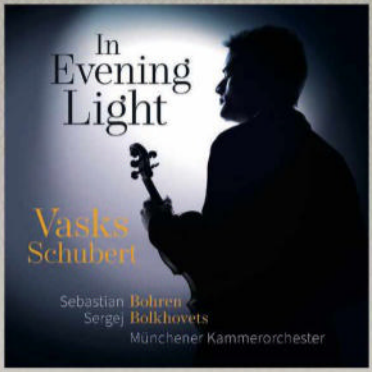
AVIE

NEW RELEASES FROM AVIE RECORDS

AV2665 | 1CD | DOWNLOAD | STREAM

EAST OF THE RIVER

New York City-based ensemble **East of the River**, directed by "recorder virtuosos" (*New York Times*) **Daphna Mor** and **Nina Stern**, debuts on AVIE with *Ija Mia*, an exploration of the soundscape of the Sephardic diaspora.



AV2662 | 1CD | DOWNLOAD | STREAM

SEBASTIAN BOHREN

Sebastian Bohren presents the world-premiere recording of "*In Evening Light*", the second violin concerto by **Pēteris Vasks**, alongside the celebrated Latvian composer's "*Lonely Angel*" and Schubert's contrasting Rondo in B minor.

AV2675 | 1CD | DOWNLOAD | STREAM

LAUREN SCOTT

Sea of Stars is a scintillating showcase of Lauren Scott's style, virtuosity and consummate skill as a lever and pedal harpist, casting her own compositions and arrangements alongside original works by Grace-Evangeline Mason, Rüdiger Oppermann and Monika Stadler.

avie-records.com

Distributed in the UK by Proper Music Distribution Ltd and in North America by Naxos of America, Inc.

MUSIC Spotify prestomusic EUROPADISC CLASSICAL

Concerto

CONCERTO CHOICE

Mozart to delight and surprise

Robert Levin is on livewire form in the early concertos, says *Rebecca Franks*

Mozart

Piano Concertos Nos 6-8, K238; K242; K246
Robert Levin (fortepiano), Ya-Fei Chuang (fortepiano), Bojan Čičić (violin), Academy of Ancient Music/ Laurence Cummings (harpsichord)
Academy of Ancient Music AAM044
60 mins

There's backstory to enjoy with this Mozart, the penultimate instalment in the reboot of an abandoned 1990s cycle on Decca, coaxed back to life for the AAM's own label during the pandemic. Robert Levin intends it to be an antidote to uniform, mass-produced Mozart, giving the life-spark back to this music. Production values are high, and there's a delicious amount of connoisseur's detail in the generous album booklet.

But the main event is Mozart's music itself – and the performance is constantly alive, alert and superbly done. In this 12th volume, it's the turn of three concertos written in the winter and spring of 1776. That date matters. Historical sleuthing revealed that fortepianos weren't available in Salzburg then, yet dynamic markings in the score suggest the composer didn't have a harpsichord in mind.

This Mozart is constantly alive, alert and superbly done

What instrument, then, should the soloist play? Levin chooses a rare tangent piano – something of a cross between fortepiano, clavichord and harpsichord – whose sound can evoke both a tangy, spiky harpsichord (as in the first movement of No. 6) or something more singing in tone (try No. 6's serene slow movement). If the sound is one delight, others include the deft playing, sprightly tempos, and dynamics that convey drama without ever being exaggerated.

The 11th disc featured the two-piano version of the Concerto No. 7 for three pianos. Here we get the full version, with Levin on tangent piano, Chung on fortepiano and Laurence Cummings on harpsichord. A lively melting-pot, beautifully recorded.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Off at a tangent: Robert Levin plays a rare 1790s keyboard

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

JS Bach

Violin Concertos
Leonidas Kavakos (violin); The ApollΩn Ensemble
Sony Classical 19658868932 64:26 mins

JS Bach's chamber music has been a continuing source of re-evaluation: the presumption that he wrote his violin concertos for the court at Cöthen has been overtaken by the notion that at least some were conceived later, for the secular Collegium Musicum concerts at Leipzig in the 1730s. Leonidas Kavakos, one of the boldest and freshest interpreters of this repertory, here brings together the two undoubted originals in A minor and E major, with two that have been reconstructed as the supposed originals of Leipzig harpsichord concertos.

Paradoxically, he opts for a small-scale group, one-to-a-part with the Greek colleagues of the ApollΩn Ensemble, but for a large-scale sound, revoking his experiments with a Baroque bow and returning to a Tourte bow from the early 1900s. The mixture is rough hewn but, at its best, exhilarating: Kavakos goes for sharply profiled phrases and punchy staccatos, often with an expressive highlight at the centre. There is some wonderfully scrunchy sound from the inner parts in the E major first movement and some glassy repose in the central movements – but also some breathless hurrying in the fast ones.

The biggest piece is the titanic D minor Concerto BWV 1052R based on the famous harpsichord concerto: however, the senior Bach scholar Christoph Wolff has recently queried whether there was ever really a violin original of this remarkable concerto (as Bach often used violin-type figuration in his keyboard works). Still, Kavakos grabs it with dramatic conviction, and this whole recording represents yet another fascinating melting pot of ancient and modern performing styles. *Nicholas Kenyon*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Bloch • Bruch • Dohnányi

Bloch: Schelomo; **Bruch:** Kol Nidrei; **Dohnányi:** Konzertstück
Tim Posner (cello); Bern Symphony Orchestra/Katharina Müllner
Claves CD 3079 56:34 mins

Cellist Tim Posner is, among many other things, one third of the Teyber Trio and has recently been made principal cello of the Amsterdam Sinfonietta. His solo star is rising, having won the Thierry Scherz Prize last year at the Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad – of which the result was the recording

of this, Posner's first major solo disc. Eschewing the more obvious concerto choices, Posner has based this evocative programme around the dramatic, theatrical tapestry of Bloch's early 20th-century work *Schelomo*, the composer's imagining of the discourses of Solomon.

No shortage of cellists have recorded *Schelomo*, yet Posner – who says he has been waiting for a chance to play it since childhood – adds his own deeply expressive character, the cello singing in rich, impassioned, and often melancholic voice, the 'voice' wrestling with ideas, holding the lavish emotional tapestry in balance. The Bern Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Katharina Müllner, swirl around Posner's expressivity in ever-moving fashion.

This 'rhapsodie Hebraïque', as Bloch termed it, is paired with a tender and again sensitive playing of Bruch's *Kol Nidrei*, the Protestant composer's interpretation of the historic invocation to forgive sins on the eve of Yom Kippur, commissioned by the Liverpool Jewish Society in 1880. It's lyrical, rich and expressive, and done with a tenderness, but never sentimentality, that gives it the intended meaning. The final piece on this recording turns to (marginally) more upbeat matters with Dohnányi's *Konzertstück*, its initial lightness given flight from the beginning by Posner and the Bern Symphony. The finale is spun out on an ethereally tensioned thread of distant timpani, oscillating cello and the Bern strings. Very much recommended. *Sarah Urwin Jones*

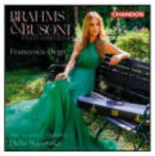
PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Brahms • Busoni

Violin Concertos

Francesca Dego (violin); BBC Symphony Orchestra/ Dalia Stasevska

Chandos CHSA 5333 61:25 mins



Busoni has never been a popular composer, despite the advocacy of some distinguished performers over the years – Joseph Szigeti in the Violin Concerto, among others. Dalia Stasevska sets the lyrical atmosphere in the brief introduction, and Francesca Dego enters with yielding tone – although her sound could be bigger, and intonation more secure in the higher

The personal touch: Héléna Macherel invents her own cadenzas for Mozart's Flute Concerto

CLIVE BARDA, PIERRE GAFNER

reaches. She's more in her element in the wistful slow movement, where the *legato* line is finely spun, but, despite the overall romantic style and harmonies, the tunes just aren't that memorable. Which means the listener has to do more work to get the most out of the music's undeniable intellectual qualities. The impetuous nature of the finale conjures more coherence from Busoni, impelling Dego to greater technical and musical assurance.

Performances of the Brahms tend to divide between those that favour the lyrical, and those that give the music a kick. It's clear from the orchestral introduction that this is going to be on the relaxed side, and Dego's first entry doesn't have the eruptive energy to push the music forward. The same laid-back approach is consistent throughout the movement, but makes more sense when we come to the cadenza – not the familiar Joachim or Kreisler, but by Busoni, with underlying timpani and the orchestra creeping in at the end. There's an eloquent oboe solo in the slow movement, but on the whole the music needs a firmer rhythmic backbone: this tends to meander. The finale begins with guts, but pulse and momentum aren't always maintained. A pity that such an interesting coupling hasn't more going for it. *Martin Cotton*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Britten

Violin Concerto; chamber works

Isabelle Faust (violin); Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra/ Jakub Hrůša

Harmonia Mundi HMM902668 64:57 mins

Hot on the heels of Baiba Skride's impeccably musical recording of Britten's Violin Concerto comes another from one of today's finest violinists. Unlike Skride, Faust was recorded live, and her sound has greater incisiveness: the opening melody isn't quite as sweet as it is in Skride's hands, but the *agitato* section is even punchier, and the pizzicatos are spiky and irruptive. In the *scherzo* there's scope for more relaxation in the trio's obsessively circulating line, but that may be the adrenaline of the live situation coming through. Faust's cadenza has real emotional involvement, and builds urgently towards the final *Passacaglia*, where conductor Jakub Hrůša leads the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra to a full-toned climax, before the soloist re-enters. The intensity which the performance maintains throughout the first few variations could be leavened to give definition and contrast to the structure, but the mitigated peace of the ambiguous ending is affectingly painted.

The rest of the album is taken up with studio recordings of Britten's chamber works featuring solo violin, and they're all from the early part of his career. Faust is joined by her brother Boris in the *Two Pieces*, exhibiting the 16-year-old composer's interest in contemporary musical trends, with nods to atonality and disruptive rhythms. *Reveille* shows how far Britten had come in forging his own style in the ensuing eight years, featuring an obsessively rotating figure in the piano supporting an ethereal violin line. After its brief *Introduction*, the Suite's four movements have bags of character in Faust and Alexander Melnikov's hands, with a spruce *March*, a virtuosic *Moto perpetuo*, a tender *Lullaby* and a wildly eccentric final *Waltz*. A fine compendium of one aspect of Britten's talent. *Martin Cotton*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Mozart

Flute Concerto No. 2; Concerto for Flute and Harp; Flute Quartet No. 1

Héléna Macherel (flute) et al; London Mozart Players/Simon Blendis

Claves CD 3082 64:32 mins

Mozart was reputed to hate the flute, on the basis of a letter to his father: 'You know I get completely paralysed when I have to write for an instrument I can't stand'. But his circumstances at the time could well explain that remark. He was on tour with his mother, and seeking his fortune as a Kapellmeister in a noble household, or as a freelance musician in a great metropolitan centre like Paris. He'd been humiliatingly turned down for a court appointment in Mannheim after being strung along for a month, and his friends had engineered a multiple flute commission to cheer him up. But the promised fee was very slow in coming.

As for Mozart's reputed dislike of the flute, actions speak louder than words: the three works on this CD are finely wrought, while the Concerto for Flute and Harp was one of Mozart's longest concertos, and one for which he had a particular affection. Each is the epitome of the *style galant*, and the playing throughout has an exemplary cleanness and sweetness.

And the cadenzas are particularly apt. Héléna Macherel notes that, as Mozart himself didn't write any cadenzas, 'I thought it would be interesting to add my personal touch to the cadenzas of Jean-Pierre Rampal or Emmanuel Pahud – the most frequently performed – or of Karlheinz Stockhausen, whose delirious mind I find too stuck in his own time.' Her own mind is far from delirious: her cadenzas are simple but also theatrical, and when she blends her sound with that of Tjasha Gafner's harp the effect has intense charm. *Michael Church*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Mozart

Piano Concertos K413; K414; K415
Jean-Efflam Bavouzet (piano); Manchester Camerata/ Gábor Takács-Nagy
Chandos CHAN20286 78:38 mins

You might expect certain fluctuations in quality when recording a series as extensive as Mozart's keyboard concertos. Yet, as with his Haydn, Debussy and Beethoven cycles, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet demonstrates remarkable consistency in this latest composer-focused project. In the ninth volume, Bavouzet and his regular collaborators Manchester Camerata and Gábor Takács-Nagy take on Concertos Nos 11, 12 and 13, prefacing the trio with the overture to the contemporaneous *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. The boisterous opening – contrasting crashing percussion and hewn melodies – foreshadows that interwoven style of *The Marriage of Figaro*'s overture.

The three concertos were composed at the beginning of Mozart's freelance period in Vienna and he performed them himself during 1783. While all are rooted in the architectural Viennese style of the day, there are glimpses of improvisatory splendour: the third movement of No. 11 loosens the buttons, with the cravat cast aside completely by the *Allegro* in No. 13. Bavouzet, who plays Mozart's own cadenzas, hints at a period style of pianism, which sounds crisp (but never acidic) in the superb acoustic of Chetham's Stoller Hall, home for this 'Mozart, made in Manchester' series. The cadenza in the first *Allegro* (No. 11) is refined and harpsichordal, but by the time we reach the *Rondeau* (No. 12), the approach is more *legato*.

There's not a lot of opportunity for drama within this triptych: instead, there are rainbow-producing sunny showers, evoked by Bavouzet and friends with an easy elegance. *Claire Jackson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

American inspiration: James Blachly conducts forgotten masterpieces

Vieuxtemps • Saint-Saëns • Fauré

Vieuxtemps: Cello Concerto No. 1; **Saint-Saëns:** Cello Concerto No. 1; 'The Swan'; *Allegro appassionato*; **Fauré:** Elégie, op. 24
Peter Martens (cello); Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra/Bernhard Gueller
Cello Classics CC1033 61 mins

Henri Vieuxtemps, a virtuosic violinist, composed the first of his seven concertos for that instrument in 1840, when he was only 20. In 1877, seven years after the appearance of the seventh and with paralysis putting an end to his success as a performer, Vieuxtemps turned his attention to the cello. His pupil Ysaÿe would later quote him as saying, 'Not runs for the sake of runs – sing, sing!'

This is borne out at times in his First Cello Concerto, though virtuosity is certainly not absent. Whether or not because of his poor health, perhaps the chief defect in this concerto, as well as in the second and last one, is that sequences are too often exact, so we're denied the pleasure of surprise. It also means that the logic of the music is unwarrantably extended, so that this first concerto lasts more than 28 minutes, while Saint-Saëns's in the same key of A minor lasts less than twenty.

The French composer's work was considered by both Rachmaninov and Shostakovich to be the greatest cello concerto ever, so it's no disgrace to Vieuxtemps to say that it considerably overpowers his own offering, both in its compactness and in the quality of its inspiration. The negativity of this judgment in no way concerns the playing of both soloist and orchestra, which is accurate and largely attentive to the qualities both of these concertos and of the three shorter pieces by Fauré and Saint-Saëns – including Fauré's passionate *Élégie* and, of course, his teacher's 'The Swan'. *Roger Nichols*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

American Counterpoints

Perry: *Violin Concerto; Prelude for Strings; Symphony in One Movement for Violas and Basses; Ye, Who Seek the Truth; **Perkinson:** Sinfonietta No. 1; *Louisiana Blues Strut; **Curtis Stewart:** *We Who Seek
Curtis Stewart (violin); Experiential Orchestra/James Blachly
Bright Shiny Things BSTD0200 59:55 mins

Julia Perry was born in 1924 – not 1927 as her gravestone states, underlining the obscurity in which she died, aged just 55, following years of illness. Yet the American composer had studied with Dallapiccola and Nadia Boulanger under Guggenheim Fellowships, won the Prix Fontainebleau and enjoyed further successes in the US and Europe, writing prolifically until her death.

It's an all-too familiar story regarding Black and women composers, and – like Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (1932-2004), named for Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and known principally for his achievements in jazz – Perry is only now gaining recognition as a significant pioneer of American classical music.

The title *American Counterpoints* is accordingly bittersweet, celebrating in Perry's birth-centenary year the prowess of both composers in interweaving quasi-tonal lines and rich textures to create distinctive and highly inventive, abstract modernist music.

They are echoed by violinist-composer Curtis Stewart (b. 1986): compelling as the soloist in Perry's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* (its world premiere recording) and Perkinson's solo violin cakewalk, *Louisiana Blues Strut* – and as composer of *We Who Seek*, an electroacoustic paean to his two neglected forebears.

The piece utilises samples from Perry's *Ye, Who Seek the Truth*, a choral work heard here in a lyrical

string arrangement by Jannina Norpoth. More haunting is Roger Zahab's arrangement of Perry's *Prelude for Strings* (originally for piano) – and still more luminously dissonant is her *Symphony in One Movement for Violas and Basses*.

All are performed with passionate commitment by conductor James Blachly's Experiential Orchestra. But it's Perry's Violin Concerto and Perkinson's *Sinfonietta No. 1* which really strike home: the former superbly vivid and sometimes unsettling in its constantly changing tempos, and the latter propelled by a wonderfully intense, almost Tippett-like polyphony.

Steph Power

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Forgotten Czech Piano Concertos

Kovařovic: Piano Concerto in F minor, Op. 6; **Bořkovec:** Piano Concerto No. 2; **Kaprálová:** Piano Concerto in D minor, Op. 7
Marek Kozák (piano), Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra/Robert Jindra
Supraphon SU43372 75 mins

Being Czech and 'forgotten' might not seem the best recommendation for entertaining listening, but these concertos provide rich musical rewards as well as casting light on a period dominated by 'big beasts' such as Dvořák and Martinů.

Karel Kovařovic was a gifted composer and a noted musical director of the Czech National Theatre. His Piano Concerto, composed in 1887, leans unashamedly on Schumann and Chopin, but its first movement is certainly striking and the *Larghetto* genuinely charming.

Pavel Bořkovec's Piano Concerto No. 2 is a different matter. A pupil of Josef Suk, he moved away from the rich late Romanticism of his teacher toward an attractive, modernist treatment of tonality. In this concerto dating from 1949, Bořkovec incorporates folk-inspired lyricism in the first movement and he also introduces a hint of jazz in the meditative opening of the middle movement.

On occasion there are sideways glances at Stravinsky and the sprung rhythms in the finale are reminiscent of Martinů's symphonic style, but as a whole this is a work of real individuality.

With a vigorously supportive Composer Society and numerous available recordings, Vítězslava Kaprálová is perhaps the best known of these composers. Her story is poignant: a brilliant figure in 1930s Czechoslovakia, she studied with Martinů in Paris, before a tragically early death cut short her undoubted promise. Her Piano Concerto in D minor, Op. 7 – a graduation exercise – is at times derivative, but also displays enormous confidence and a huge expressive range.

The soloist, Marek Kozák, is a superb advocate for these widely differing works, providing thoughtful and persuasively idiomatic interpretations. Robert Jindra and the Prague Radio Symphony, somewhat more distantly recorded than the soloist, supply dependable if occasionally slightly untidy accompaniment.

Jan Smaczny

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

JUDY CROOKSTON, GETTY

BACKGROUND TO...
Ernest Bloch's *Schelomo*

Written in 1915, *Schelomo* was the final work in Ernest Bloch's 'Jewish Cycle', which also included the 'Israel' Symphony of 1912-16. 'Schelomo' is the Hebrew form of 'Solomon', and Bloch later explained that the work's prominent cello part represented the Old Testament's King Solomon, while the orchestra embodied the world around him. The work drew some purple prose from the critic Guido Gatti, who noted that 'the orchestra palpitates in all colours of the rainbow ... waves of sound that seem to soar upward in stupendous vortices and fall back in a shower of myriads of iridescent drops'.

Opera

OPERA CHOICE

The devil is in the detail as opera gets a welcome revival

George Hall discovers much to enjoy in Louise Bertin's little-known take on a Goethe classic

A dangerous love: Karina Gauvin takes the part of Margarita

Bertin

Fausto

Karine Deshayes, Karina Gauvin et al; Les Talens Lyriques; Flemish Radio Choir/Christophe Rousset

Bru Zane BZ1054 119:38 mins (2 discs)

The first recording of a long-lost operatic score by Louise Bertin (1805-77) is an important event. Set to the composer's own libretto based on Goethe, Bertin's *Fausto* went through various versions intended for different casts and theatres – and even in different languages – prior to a brief premiere run at the French capital's Italian-language house, the Théâtre Italien, in 1831, thereafter disappearing until a Parisian revival in June 2023.

Given other options, what has been recorded here is an Italian opera in the *semiseria* genre with a mezzo lead. From the sternly dramatic overture onwards, the impact of Bertin's ambitious orchestral scoring suggests a kinship with Berlioz. A list of stylistic influences might also include Gluck, Mozart, Weber (in passages relating to the supernatural) and, very occasionally, Rossini. Apart from the simple recitatives with piano accompaniment, the result frequently shows astonishing flair: *Fausto* may not be a masterpiece, but it is well worth encountering.

This long-forgotten work frequently shows astonishing flair

If it feels odd to have Faust cast as a mezzo-soprano – the role was originally to be sung by Rosmunda Pisaroni, then rewritten for tenor for the premiere – the principals realise their roles with conviction: Karine Deshayes's philosopher, Karina Gauvin's Margarita, Ante Jerkunica's Mefistofele and Nico Darmanin's Valentin all reach a high standard. There's strong support from the Flemish Radio Choir and Les Talens Lyriques, with conductor Christophe Rousset revealing the extraordinary qualities of this long-forgotten work.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

MICHAEL SLOBODIAN

Charpentier

David et Jonathas

Les Pages et les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, Orchestre Les Temps Présents/ Olivier Schneebeli

Aparté AP342 122:00 mins (2 discs)

David et Jonathas is one of those difficult-to-place works. Not quite an opera and not really an oratorio, it was composed for the Jesuit Collège Louis-le-Grand in Paris in 1688, at a time when Charpentier had few other outlets for dramatic stage works. Its in-between status is reflected in this recording, which was made live at the Royal Opera of the Château de Versailles in 2021, a year before another recording of the same work (released last year) was made at the palace's royal chapel.

The recording uses children's and men's voices only, replicating the sounds and the circumstances of the work's first performance at the all-male college. This approach works best in the dramatic choruses and in the ensemble numbers, where the Pages and Chantres (singing pupils and older students) of the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles take on the roles of shepherds, warriors, captives and Israelites. A serious flaw is the casting of Natacha Boucher as Jonathas. Her youthful soprano has the unsteady timbre of a younger, male chorister, which makes her duets with David (tenor Clément Debieuvre) sound uncomfortable and even a little unsettling.

For his part, Debieuvre sings adequately enough, but without much emotional depth or variation. David Witczak is more impressive as the tormented but vulnerable Saul. Edwin Crossley-Mercer is an authoritative Achis and ghost of Samuel, while Jean-François Novelli and Jean-François Lombard are both convincingly nasty as Joabel and the Pythoness. Olivier Schneebeli directs the instrumental ensemble Les Temps Présents with breadth and vigour. The normally rich acoustics of the Versailles opera house are hindered by an imbalance between the forward-placed continuo and woodwind players at the back. *John-Pierre Joyce*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Donizetti

Dalinda

Lidia Fridman, Luciano Ganci, Paolo Bordogna et al; Berliner Operngruppe/Felix Krieger

Oehms OC989 101:00 mins (2 discs)

You have to hand it to Donizetti for sheer perseverance. *Dalinda* was his last-ditch attempt to evade the Bourbon censors in Naples, transferring the plot of *Lucrezia Borgia* from Renaissance Italy to the Middle East of the Crusades. Even this disguise failed, however, and an exasperated Donizetti finally sold off the manuscript of *Dalinda* in sections. They were reunited 185 years later thanks to the painstaking research of Eleonora Di Cintio, whose new critical edition forms the basis of this world premiere recording, taken from a semi-staged performance in Berlin in May 2023.

How different is *Dalinda* from *Lucrezia Borgia*? Apart from the geographical setting, the first two acts are substantially the same, the story of disguised identities, confused mother/son relations and a tragic division of loyalties. It's in Act III that *Dalinda* really comes into its own, making it distinct from its original inspiration. The role of the son, Ildebrando, is substantially fleshed out, and Dalinda herself is given added depth as a Muslim woman facing the judgement of Christian men.

The new recording has all the pros and cons of a live recording when it comes to sound – uneven in its balance, but alive with drama. The role of Dalinda is extremely demanding, and Russian soprano Lidia Fridman gives us plenty of thrills, with a dark fury in her tone and real dramatic presence throughout. Luciano Ganci delivers a youthful, lyrical tenor line as Ildebrando, Dalinda's ill-fated son, faltering occasionally in his more heroic moments. Bass Paolo Bordogna is impressive as Acmet, the ruthless Saracen king, and Felix Krieger conducts his Berlin forces with drive and dramatic gusto, providing thrilling pace to this newly forged Donizetti melodrama.
Ashutosh Khandekar

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Gay

The Beggar's Opera (new version by Ian Burton and Robert Carsen)

Robert Burt, Beverley Klein et al; Les Arts Florissants/William Christie

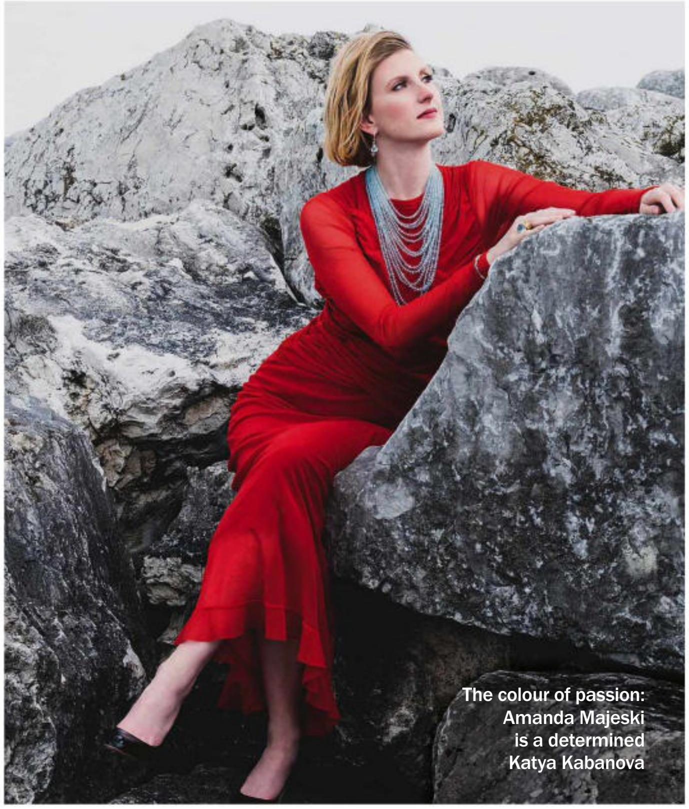
Opus Arte OABD7283D (DVD/Blu-ray) 118:00 mins

In 1728 John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* replaced operatic heroes with underworld lowlifes, arias with common tunes, recitative with dialogue, and love relations with corrupt expedients. In this production, opera director Robert Carsen blends the passion, vitriol, and cheeky appeal of Gay's original – here set to new dialogue by Ian Burton – with William Christie's version of the score, and some West End-style singing and dancing.

Benjamin Purkiss makes a riveting Macheath: steamily sexy with women, menacing with his mates, visceral in voicing Gay's indictment of society. Purkiss registers these shifts by alternately crooning, belting, or tapping into a limpid falsetto. Matching his versatility is Olivia Brereton, who as Macheath's pregnant ex-lover Lucy weaponises Gay's musical pastiche: when, to the tune of 'If Love's a Sweet Passion' (from Purcell's *The Fairy-Queen*) she recounts her sexual exploitation, the bitterness bites hard. Kate Batter wins our sympathy as Polly but is less interesting to listen to, partly because she too often scoops to communicate upset. As Jenny, the ex-lover who betrays Macheath, Emma Kate Nelson combines sultry embodiment with slick vocalism. Other elements of the production – the gangsters' macho dance numbers, the band's riotous dispatch of Christie's deft arrangement, the diverse interiors created by actors moving the crates of James Bradley's warehouse-based set, the subtle weave of montage with stage movement – add to this DVD's delights.

Yet I mourn the lack of John Gay in this *Beggar's Opera*. Gay's social criticism relied largely on epigrammatic zingers in his spoken dialogue. Burton's dialogue, by contrast, devolves into farce, with cocaine-taking and the f-word his substitute for Gay's searing wit. Such treatment sells *The Beggar's Opera* short, even as this production's performers enrich its delights.
Berta Joncus

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★


The colour of passion: Amanda Majeski is a determined Katya Kabanova

Janáček

Katya Kabanova

Amanda Majeski, Simon O'Neill, Katarina Dalayman, Magdalena Kožená et al; London Symphony Orchestra & Chorus/Simon Rattle

LSO Live LSO0889 99:26 mins (2 discs)

The latest chapter in Simon Rattle's Janáček journey with the London Symphony Orchestra was recorded live at London's Barbican Hall. And despite the Hall's often less than sympathetic acoustic, Rattle and his recording engineers have produced a *Katya* that sounds magnificent both in its attention to musical detail and in those sudden orchestral climaxes that seem to sweep nature itself into the concert hall.

From the opening bars of the prelude, with those eight ominous notes on the timpani that will haunt the opera, it is clear that this is Rattle's *Katya*. Janáček's epigrammatic musical phrases are scrupulously rendered, and the contrast between the claustrophobic lives within the village homes and the grandeur of the natural world along the Volga is beautifully judged. The end of Act II, after Katya and Boris exult in their new-found love with a triumphant shout from the orchestra and then a solo violin and slightly anxious woodwinds before the curtain falls, is a lesson in creative control.

The cast are as strong as you get at present, with the American soprano Amanda Majeski both anxious and determined as Katya, much more than the picked-upon wallflower we often hear. You know what Simon O'Neill's Boris has endured at the hands of his drunken father from his bruised, edgy tone. And who wouldn't quake as Katarina Dalayman's Kabanicha lays down the law to her daughter-in-law before her son Tichon leaves home. As for the other pair of lovers, Varvara and Kudrjas (handsomely sung by Magdalena Kožená and Ladislav Elgr): for once they have a life of their own. You know that they will get to Moscow, paradoxically liberated by Katya's death. *Christopher Cook*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Choral & Song

CHORAL & SONG CHOICE

Gorgeous Rachmaninov full of light and shade

Alexandra Wilson applauds the serene singing of an all-male choir in the much-loved *All-Night Vigil*

Rumbling depths: the PaTRAM Institute Male Choir is on form

PATRAM INSTITUTE, BENJAMIN EALOVEGA

Rachmaninov

All-Night Vigil
PaTRAM Institute Male Choir/Ekaterina Antonenko
Chandos CHSA 5349 (CD/SACD, 2 discs) 70:13 mins

Deep bass notes are one of the most striking features of Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil*, and a *pianissimo* scale down to a bottom B flat led the conductor of the first performance to ask, 'Where in the world will you find such basses? They are as rare as asparagus at Christmas.' Rachmaninov replied that he knew his Russian peasants. Choral basses have doubtless cursed him ever since.

In this new recording from the Patriarch Tikhon Russian-American Music Institute (PaTRAM), a group dedicated to the promotion of Russian Orthodox liturgical singing, male vocal timbres both low and high are celebrated in a special arrangement for tenors and basses. Preserving Rachmaninov's harmonies and textures as far as possible means that all singers are pushed to the extremes of their range. There are some jaw-dropping bass sonorities here, but the overall impression is far from sombre: indeed, what is most surprising is the sense of lightness and tenderness that emerges from using high male voices.

Recorded in the resonant acoustic of the Russian Orthodox Convent Monastery Church of the Ascension, located in a tranquil position on the Mount of Olives, this is a performance of deep spiritual meaning. Never hurried, conductor Ekaterina Antonenko pays painstaking attention to dynamic detail and carefully shaped phrases. In a work that poses significant demands for singers, nothing here is laboured. Control, smoothness and serenity are the most fitting words to describe a performance in which all singers, soloists and choristers alike, exhibit an astonishing mastery of vocal legato. A familiar work is reinvented with gorgeous results.

> This is a performance of the *All-Night Vigil* with deep spiritual meaning

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

JS Bach

Early Cantatas
Benjamin Alard (organ) et al; Les Arts Florissants/Paul Agnew
Harmonia Mundi HAF8905364 73 mins

Conductor Paul Agnew has turned the young JS Bach into a dramaturge. As the first concert and recording in Les Arts Florissants' series *Bach: A Life in Music*, this performance from May 2022 features cantatas and organ fantasias from the years 1703-08. Agnew believes that Bach was intensely theatrical as a young man: as such, he makes Bach's cantata words the occasion for fiery musical statements, and his counterpoint a springboard for bold contrasts and masterfully timed buildups.

With just one or two to a part, each musician is a leader here. The purity of the singers' straight tones and the immediacy and depth of their individual reactions to lexical meaning are bracing, yet held within a delicately balanced ensemble. Soprano Miriam Allan and bass Edward Grint stand out for their persuasiveness, Allan through the glint she adds to her gorgeous top register and Grint through the velvety qualities of his extreme bottom register. Organist Benjamin Alard embraces Agnew's conception, bending Bach's 'fantasticus' style to the service of storytelling. The continuo players enrich textures, often surprisingly.

Agnew pits Bach's cantata setting of *Christ lag in Todesbanden* against that of Johann Kuhnau, who was 25 years Bach's senior. This programming, and the deep artistry of the performers, reveals Kuhnau's music as both lovely and vastly inferior to Bach's. Kuhnau's motifs are shapely, but Bach's are a gut punch; Kuhnau's counterpoint is sturdy, but Bach's is dazzlingly weird. Hats off to Les Arts Florissants for daring to make Bach a man of the theatre. *Berta Joncus*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Rebecca Dale

Night Seasons
Steven Isserlis (cello) et al; Philharmonia Orchestra; Tenebrae/ Nigel Short et al
Signum SIGCD866 65 mins

Is the flummery of what composer Andy Vores has termed 'the new niceness' an inevitable consequence of the contradictory aesthetics of 'serious' contemporary music? If so, is it fair to number Rebecca Dale among the, er, flummers? It's a matter of perspective. Dale's background in film music is shared by many other composers who also write for the concert hall, and the broad strokes that are a feature of much of her work are typical of the music of mainstream cinema.

None of this particularly excuses the blandness of the eight shortish pieces making up the bulk of this recording, although the soloists (particularly Steven Isserlis) add conviction and Nigel Short ensures the choir avoids resorting to sentimental gush.

However, given a broader canvas to work upon and a genuine, if harrowing, sense of motivation, Dale's skills are best expressed in the titular concerto 'Night Seasons'. The album as a whole was created while Dale's father was terminally ill, so its underlying theme of supportive comfort is at least understandable. The title piece, however, transforms this mindset into one of resilience, affirmation and coming to terms with adversity, drawing on a wider musical palette while retaining the composer's approachable style and deploying her talent for condensed but coherent development, which is probably something film composers learn early on. The piece as a whole is by turn penetrating and genuinely poignant, and certainly makes this release worth owning. *Roger Thomas*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Duruflé • Poulenc

Duruflé: Requiem;
Poulenc: Lenten Motets
The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge/Stephen Layton
Hyperion CDA68436 56:01 mins

The candles and incense are palpable. There have been plenty of recordings of Duruflé's plainchant-inspired Requiem in its 1948 choir and organ incarnation, but few match this newcomer for vivid atmosphere. Captured in Saint-Eustache, Paris, the sizeable organ and vast spaces provide an unmistakably French hue for the Choir of Trinity College Cambridge conducted by Stephen Layton. Sure enough, some details merge: but, like the mingling of colours in stained glass, that is the point, the recording wisely working with the haze. The choir is magnificent, emerging through former Trinity organ scholar Harrison Cole's adroitly chosen organ textures in the Introit, yet producing searing radiance in the climax of the Sanctus. If not fully continental in expression, Anglican primness is left behind, with a reverent intensity permeating everything, whether the Kyrie's calm exhortations or mezzo-soprano's Katherine Gregory's richly burnished Pie Jesu.

'Reverent intensity': The Choir of Trinity College is magnificent in Duruflé

It is a pity that the church's ambience disappears so swiftly after the beatific last note of the In Paradisum, and a longer period of repose is needed before the impressively assured performance of Poulenc's four Lenten motets. The choir negotiates the challenges of Poulenc's jumps between fervent supplication and contemplative sorrow with apparent ease. The opening cries of 'Timor et tremor' are bracingly full-throated, yet the disjunct lines of 'Tenebrae factae sunt' are controlled with crystalline beauty. Recorded in Trinity College Chapel in Cambridge, the more defined, yet still generously resonant acoustic suits the penitential spirit of these short masterpieces, completing a sublimely evocative disc. *Christopher Dingle*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Scarlatti • Dvořák

Scarlatti: Stabat Mater;
Dvořák: Stabat Mater
La Tempête; Simon-Pierre Bestion
Alpha ALPHA1054 93 mins (2 discs)

La Tempête is a group inspired by points of contact and influence across time and space. For their latest venture, irreverent director Simon-Pierre Bestion finds parallels in two Stabat Maters composed more than 150 years apart, by Domenico Scarlatti and Dvořák. There are biographical similarities – both wrote their settings at the same age, and had the same number of children (although Dvořák's setting mourns the losses of his first three). But for Bestion, he detects in them the same 'tonal language, same expression of sorrow'.

Rather than placing the settings side by side, he interpolates them in alternating tracks, calling for a 'sensory experience' over a liturgical one. A new re-orchestration brings their soundworlds closer together, augmenting Scarlatti with chamber strings and scaling down Dvořák with an intimate piano accompaniment. But despite their common key, shifting back and forth between different harmonic languages makes for a rather unsettled listening experience.

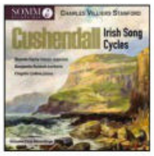
Concept aside, the performance is mostly very well refined, with a bright, fervent choral sound. A finely balanced quartet of soloists brings poise and panache to the Dvořák, with some superb moments from soprano Amélie Raison and tenor Edouard Monjanel.

Across the two discs, we're ushered along on a journey from deep introspection to brilliant extroversion. If there's a section where Bestion's thesis bears out, it's in the last few tracks, where we get a greater sense of Scarlatti's and Dvořák's kindred spirits through their whirling, ecstatic final movements. A stylish and vibrant performance on the whole – but the maverick mash-up might not sell it to all listeners. *Amelia Parker*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Stanford

Cushendall: Irish Song Cycles
Sharon Carty (mezzo-soprano), Benjamin Russell (baritone), Finghin Collins (piano)
SOMM SOMMCD0681 81:33 mins



Stanford is best known as a bastion of Anglican choral music, beloved of church choirs across Britain. *Cushendall* is the latest release in Somm Records' exploration of another side of his music, taking its title from the substantial song-cycle that Stanford completed in 1910 as a homage to his homeland of Ireland, a nation in the throes of political turbulence as Unionists clashed with proponents of Home Rule.

The opening cycle sets poems by the passionate nationalist John Stevenson, while Winifred Letts' verse adds a more pastoral note in *A Fire of Turf*, and casts a wry eye on the quirks of Irish society in *A Sheaf of Songs from Leinster*. Stanford responds to these visions of romantic landscapes and eccentric

characters with a wistful nostalgia for a disappearing culture. Beneath the stirring folkloric veneer is a Brahmsian undertow of longing, together with witty flashes of musical parody: 'Daddy-Long-Legs' quotes Brünnhilde's fire scene when the titular insect gets too close to a naked flame.

The two Irish soloists featured here, mezzo Sharon Carty and baritone Benjamin Russell, are ideal exponents of these ballads, singing with a touching warmth and charm that is mirrored in the sensitive accompaniment of Finghin Collins. It all sounds fresh and unaffected. Russell is effective and funny in *Blarney Ballads*, featuring the wicked lampooning of the British prime minister WE Gladstone and his support for Home Rule.

Somm's recording captures the intimacy of a salon recital, bringing the singers' personalities to the fore and taking the listener to the heart of these gentle, attractive snapshots from a lost era. *Ashutosh Khandekar*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Telemann

Ino; Late Works

Christina Landshamer (soprano); Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin/ Bernhard Forck

Pentatone PTC5187072 70 mins

This disc offers a taste of the 'Spätlese' (the 'late harvest') of Telemann's career: works that show the octogenarian never lost his youthful spirit and joie de vivre.

The centrepiece of the programme is a setting of Carl Wilhelm Ramler's monologue inspired by the Greek myth of Ino. The 84-year-old Telemann breathes dramatic life into the story of the eponymous princess and her son who, to escape the frenzied rage of her husband, leap off a cliff into the sea where Neptune transforms them into deities. German soprano Christina Landshamer delivers Ramler's text with real conviction, and she draws on a vivid palette of colours and expressive devices in response to the music's rhetoric and lyricism. At times, her approach is rather too operatic for a chamber cantata and, in more impassioned moments, her vibrato intrudes with the clarity of the melodic line. The instrumental playing is, by contrast, clean and stylish and the ensemble evidently relishes the work's vacillating moods.

Hidden gems: Véronique Gens turns a spotlight on rare French songs

JEAN-BAPTISTE MILLOT

The cantata is framed by a series of genial instrumental works showcasing Telemann's skill as a colourist and storyteller. He offers little windows onto everyday life in the D major Overture and Divertimento in E flat, confecting lolloping hunts, courtly dances, the chiming of a carillon, a dawn chorus, the banter of dinner conversations. The Berlin players point up the textural contrasts between silky strings, reedy oboes and the raw and resonant sound of natural horns. The concluding *Sinfonia melodica* opens with a double oboe concerto-in-microcosm and gives way to a series of graceful dances, despatched with gallantry and flair by this crack ensemble. *Kate Bolton-Porciatti*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

La Belle Dame

Works by Delius, Holst, C Scott, Brian et al

Roderick Williams (baritone), Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin); BBC Concert Orchestra/John Andrews

EM Records EMR CD085 61:21 mins

Two cheers for the repertoire, but a resounding three cheers for the BBC Concert Orchestra and conductor John Andrews for exploring the hinterland of British music as the 19th century slid into the 20th. Quilter and Holst we know – but Cyril Scott, Alexander Mackenzie and Norman O'Neill, whose setting of Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* gives the CD its title, are rarely if ever played today.

There's Havergal Brian too: his *Legend*, orchestrated and played with devotion by the violinist Rupert Marshall-Luck; music that deserves to be better known. Delius too: the *Petite Suite d'Orchestre* from the late 1880s, while not exactly an apprentice work, is from a composer who has not yet quite found his own distinctive lyric voice, though the *Berceuse* has a Delian lilt to it that the BBC Concert Orchestra strings relish. And there's a zippy piccolo running through the *Scherzo*.

Roderick Williams is in fine voice as the stern-toned soloist in Holst's *Ornulf's Drapa*, a granite-like monologue hewn from one of Ibsen's early poetic dramas that is suffused with Wagnerian echoes.

Williams even brandishes a Scottish accent for Cyril Scott's ballad *The Fair Maid of Kirconnel*, but he's at his most characterful in O'Neill's setting of Keats's ballads. This is music that reminds us how European late-Romantic British music was. Scott, O'Neill and Quilter all studied in Frankfurt. Delius went to Germany too. But through their music runs a preoccupation with Englishness. That's what drives the most satisfying track here, Roger Quilter's 'The Faithless Shepherdess' from *Seven Elizabethan Lyrics* – and Williams makes the most of it. *Christopher Cook*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Paysage

Songs by Hahn, Fauré, Saint-Saëns, Chausson et al

Véronique Gens (soprano); Munich Radio Orchestra/Hervé Niquet

Alpha ALPHA1030 56:00 mins

This album is devoted to orchestral songs by late 19th-century French male composers. Arranged loosely as a landscape, the repertoire is often impressive and imaginative, avoiding monotonous chunks and flowing between topics and textures, including France's recurring fascination with the 'Orient'. Instrumental numbers give space for reflection. Familiar figures like Fauré, Saint-Saëns, Massenet and Gounod (albeit not always in their best-known works) rub shoulders with Théodore Dubois and Fernand de La Tombelle.

Véronique Gens and the Munich Radio Orchestra under Hervé Niquet are strong throughout, with generally thoughtful interpretations and excellent recorded sound quality. Orchestral song accompaniment is for obvious reasons less flexible than the piano, tending towards steadier and louder performances, but the payoff is in instrumental colour. The orchestral soloists shine throughout, especially wind and harp. Gounod's *La Fauvette*, for instance, is charming and guileless, and his *Clos ta paupière* is flawless, the orchestration dovetailing immaculately with the voice.

Yet some inclusions, for instance Dubois's 'Celui que j'aime' and the 'Andantino' from his *Petits rêves d'enfant*, feel unfocused or foursquare. Not all these composers are great melodists. Approaches to orchestration can sound generic (see Tombelle's *Rêverie*) or redundant – for instance, Hahn's *Mai* feels weighed down. That said, Dubois grew on me, with the beautifully performed 'Blancheurs d'ailes'.

Better liner notes would help: why was Dubois neglected during the 20th century? Who was Tombelle? And it is odd, nowadays, to claim 'discoveries' without including anything by one of the outstanding late 19th-century French women composers. *Natasha Loges*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

CHAMBER CHOICE

Words and music combine in fascinating dialogue

Roger Thomas finds poetry, intricacy and rich narrative in Finnissy's complex, rewarding music

Elegant approach: Lotte Betts-Dean's delivery is compelling

BENJAMIN EALOVEGA

Michael Finnissy

Alternative Readings; Botany Bay; Wisdom etc
Marsyas Trio, Lotte Betts-Dean, Joseph Havlat
Divine Art MEX77102 76:00 mins

As Michael Finnissy points out in the booklet notes, these compositions for voice (mostly) with small ensemble typify much of his as-yet sparsely recorded output, so this release (from a label that continues to serve the composer well) is particularly welcome.

Anyone nervous of the so-called New Complexity could do far worse than ease into this style via this recording, where the foregrounded element is Finnissy's profound respect for language, its cadences, how it conveys meaning and the ways in which its interaction with music can be expressed in terms of tension and reconciliation (and sometimes, but not necessarily, of musical and/or emotional resolution). His empathetic settings of poetry, biblical passages and indigenous and folk music texts, all of which are represented here, result in songs that are effectively miniatures of musical theatre: don't look to lieder here, so much as to Bergian Sprechstimme. The above are appropriately bracketed by two versions (one live and one studio) of the title composition, a trio instrumental that in some respects reflects the discourse of the vocal pieces (and whose provocative sequence of false endings would have made Haydn proud). A shorter work for trio, derived from the music of Hildegard of Bingen and further maintaining the interpenetration of vocal and instrumental elements, is neatly programmed as a mid-point.

> Finnissy's empathetic song settings are effectively musical theatre miniatures

The performers all give insightful performances, although mezzo Lotte Betts-Dean's elegantly inflected delivery is particularly compelling. The recorded sound is both intimate and detailed.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

Couperin

Concerts Royaux
Pierre Gallon & Matthieu Boutineau (harpsichords), Thibaut Roussel (theorbo, Baroque guitar)
Harmonia Mundi HMM90272 61:42 mins

Harmonia Mundi celebrates the music of François Couperin with a release of his four suites that were published in 1722 under the title of *Les Concerts Royaux*. In the hands of Pierre Gallon, Matthieu Boutineau and Thibaut Roussel these works are revealed in a new guise, arranged for two harpsichords with theorbo and Baroque guitar. Couperin himself sanctioned performances of this repertoire on harpsichord, or alternatively on an ensemble consisting of violin, flute, oboe, viol and bassoon. During the composer's lifetime, meanwhile, it was also customary for chamber music to be performed on two harpsichords, reminding us of the fluidity of instrumentation in the 18th century.

The album opens with the first Concert in G major, in which Gallon and Boutineau capture that key's innate qualities of tenderness and energy, as noted by Couperin's near-contemporary Rameau in 1722. The second Concert is enhanced by the inclusion of Roussel's theorbo in three of the five movements. Its contrasting plucked sonority comes across particularly effectively in both the opening *Prélude* and in the later *Air tendre*.

Concert No. 3 reveals a delightful array of plucked keyboard timbres, of which the *Courante* and the *Musette* are real gems. The fourth Concert, the only one of the set to be composed in a minor key, mixes together a range of international styles from the period. Here, indeed, the cosmopolitan character is further enriched by the inclusion of a Baroque guitar (Roussel again) in both the *Allemande* and the *Forlana e rondeau.*

This album is an elegant and stylish manifestation of 'le bon goût' in Couperin's music. Gallon and Boutineau also make a compelling case for further instances of repertoire reimagined for two harpsichords. *Ingrid Pearson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Mendelssohn

Lieder ohne Worte (arr. for violin and piano by Ferdinand David)

Michael Barenboim (violin), Natalia Pegarkova-Barenboim (piano)

Linn CKD696 79:00 mins

Ferdinand David (1810-1873) was the leader of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra when Felix Mendelssohn was its director. The two were good friends, and it was for David that Mendelssohn wrote his Violin Concerto in E minor. Not surprising, then, that David also saw the potential for arranging some of the *Lieder ohne Worte (Songs Without Words)* for violin and piano. While the originals are designed for piano solo, they chiefly rely on melody plus accompaniment, suiting them to such transcription, and they were so popular that there would have been a strong market for the sheet music. David's treatment of them is respectful and straightforward.

Exceptionally fine pianists often succeed with a whole disc of the originals, but in this attentive and thoughtful performance by Michael Barenboim (son of Daniel) and his pianist partner Natalia Pegarkova-Barenboim, the arrangement seems to limit the musical expression rather than freeing it. One of Mendelssohn's more famous statements was that music is more precise than words. Unlimited by available vocabulary, it can capture shades of emotions for which the terms do not really exist. That implied variety and nuance does not quite come across in these readings as strongly as it might.

Perhaps Barenboim's style is being limited by notions of what is appropriate to the 1830s-40s; there's some over-reliance on *portamento* and lightness of tone that does not always admit the wealth of character available to instrument and music alike. A contrast with Josef Gingold's molten-gold eloquence in Fritz Kreisler's version of Op. 62 No. 1, though pertinent, would maybe seem unfair. Still, Barenboim is well partnered by Pegarkova-Barenboim, making a seamless and affectionate duo, and the recording sound quality is generally very good. *Jessica Duchen*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

French connections: stylish Couperin from harpsichordist Pierre Gallon et al

Pejačević

Sonata for Cello and Piano; Canzonetta; Menuet etc

Trio RoVerde

Brilliant 97020 76:83 mins

Recent years have seen a renewal of interest in the music of Dora Pejačević, the Croatian composer who died in 1923 at the age of only 37. She is remembered now as the first Croatian to compose a piano concerto, and her small number of other orchestral scores probably count among her finest achievements. Perhaps inevitably, her chamber music leans towards the salons which, as a member of the aristocracy, she naturally inhabited.

The four-movement Cello Sonata in E minor dates from the same year as that concerto, yet is less distinctive. It inhabits a likeable brand of late Romanticism that here keeps the cellist Caroline Sypniewski and pianist Ekaterina Litvintseva fully engaged – the nimble *Scherzo* being a highlight of this lively performance. The cello-friendly key of E minor (think Elgar and his concerto) underlines the elegiac tone of the work. In the slightly earlier Piano Trio (1910), it's the first movement's lyrical sweep that registers most strikingly, inspiring an impassioned performance from the Trio RoVerde (violinist Lusiné Harutyunyan joining her colleagues).

There's more than might be first imagined to the five beautifully played pieces for violin and piano that take up the middle of this new release. The Canzonetta of 1899 is notable both for being Pejačević's first published work and for its dedication to the very young Hungarian violinist Stefi Geyer – better known as the inspiration and unrequited love of Bartók a decade or so later. And the latest of the works included here, the *Meditation* from 1919 dedicated to the Czech composer Vítězslav Novák, shows Pejačević on the verge of a newer musical language. *John Allison*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Price • Sowerby

Price: String Quartet No. 2 etc;
Sowerby: String Quartet

Avalon String Quartet

Naxos 8559941 74:33 mins

Both these 20th-century composers spent much of their time in Chicago, but they lived very different American lives. Leo Sowerby, born in 1895, sustained a long career as an established composer and teacher, and won a Pulitzer Prize in 1946. The mixed-race Florence Price, born eight years earlier, worked diligently against much harder odds, but achieved no comparable distinction. Today, however, Price is the one who gets bountifully performed and recorded, while Sowerby makes modest appearances here and there as a reminder of the past.

Yet it is Sowerby's A minor String Quartet that makes the biggest impression on this album. His language is muscular and direct, just like his English tempo markings: 'languidly, darkly', 'very fast'. The latter describes the second movement, as relentlessly and deliciously syncopated as any of Tippett's early works for strings. Sowerby can equally be expansively lyrical. Passionate advocates, the Avalon players excel at any speed, though they can do little to repair the work's one flaw: lopsided architecture, with a meatier finale definitely required.

Price's music often manifests its own structural quirks, but her String Quartet No. 2 of 1935 is particularly cogent, with turbulent chromatic passages neatly balanced by soulful melodies always enhanced by the Avalon Quartet's warm, rounded tones. Textures and melodies come equally meshed in 1951's *Five Folksongs in Counterpoint*, reaching their peak in a spirited and extended treatment of 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'. All told, this is an excellent release. *Geoff Brown*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Tchaikovsky • Korngold

String Sextets

Nash Ensemble

Hyperion CDA68406 70:07 mins

Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence* owes its title to the fact that he jotted down the beguiling theme of its slow movement in that city while working there on his 1890 opera *The Queen of Spades*. Composing the string sextet didn't come easily, and he confessed to a constant feeling that he was writing for orchestra and then rearranging the music for six players. Following a semi-private first performance, Tchaikovsky revised the last two movements, replacing in particular a lumbering *fugato* in the third movement with a much more delicate passage played with bouncing bows.

It's true that long stretches of the work's first half remain unremittingly thick, though not the *Adagio's* melody, which is laid out as an operatic duet for the first

violin and first cello (finely realised by Stephanie Gonley and Adrian Brendel on this new recording) with delicate pizzicato accompaniment.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold was just 17 when, in 1914, he began writing his String Sextet Op.10, but he was already an experienced composer who had been hailed as a genius by Mahler. The sextet is in Korngold's characteristically intricate late Romantic style, with a first movement that juggles three distinct tempi and a seemingly unending chain of thematic ideas; and a lushly scored slow movement of great serenity. The Viennese-toned *Intermezzo* third movement keeps threatening to develop into a full-blown *ländler*, while the witty and dizzyingly fast *Finale* brings the work to a headlong finish. The Nash Ensemble's performances are first-rate, but a bit more space around the recorded sound wouldn't have gone amiss. *Misha Donat*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

But Not My Soul

Price: String Quartet No. 2; **Dvořák:** String Quartet No. 12 'American'; **Rhiannon Giddens:** At the Purchaser's Option (arr. Garchik)
Ragazze Quartet
Channel Classics CCS45724 60:00 mins

There is much thoughtful and spirited playing to enjoy here. An introduction explains the motivation for the repertoire, which combines Florence Price and Dvořák with a number by Rhiannon Giddens (b. 1977) in an arrangement for string quartet.

Worthwhile recordings both stimulate pleasure and provoke thought, and the Ragazze have achieved this admirably. Price's String Quartet No. 2 glows in their imaginative, richly coloured performance. The substantial, sultry *Moderato* alternates between tonal clarity and ambiguity, perfectly capturing the musical zeitgeist of the mid-1930s with its absorption of both retrospective and new art music trends. *Juba*, the third movement, has verve and cheek, and this energy is maintained through the closing movement.

The combination with Dvořák's sunny 'American' Quartet No. 12 reveals much about the Czech composer's affinity with the spirit and music of 19th-century USA. The pentatonic, folk-inspired melodies evoke his admiration for African-American melodies. Dvořák's structures can sprawl a little, so overall the performance could benefit from more direction, especially the second movement. I was most convinced by the *Finale*, where each of the movement's moods is accorded a distinctive colour and voicing.

The closing number, 'At the Purchaser's Option', evokes a 19th-century advertisement in which the purchase of an enslaved person's baby was described as an optional extra. Arranged here by Jacob Garchik in 2017, this work shows the Ragazze's wide stylistic range while gently underlining the album's message about racially and musically entangled pasts. The recorded clarity is nicely clear, warm and detailed. *Natasha Loges*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Diavolo

Tartini: Six Violin Sonatas
La Serenissima/Adrian Chandler
Signum SIGCD781 75:41 mins

Don't approach this disc if feeling peckish. Punning on the title, the cover's blistered pizza will do nothing to help! The contents, on the other hand, can be devoured with avidity – even if six Tartini sonatas at a single sitting may be an acquired taste. That said, Adrian Chandler has been astute in his programming, ringing the changes with a sonata for solo violin, one for violin and cello, three from the Corellian Op. 1 set, and ending – how could he not? – with the celebrated 'Devil's Trill' sonata that even attracted Sigmund Freud's attention.

Tartini's sonatas tend to be anthologised rather than presented en masse, but such is Chandler's long-honed expertise in the Italian repertoire that he's the ideal guide. Ideal too because, over the duration, his warm, inviting tone reaps rich dividends. Indeed, the account of the 'Devil's Trill' is perhaps the most compelling currently available. The dramatic outbursts in the lilting first movement are bold, perfectly 'placed', yet never exaggerated. His impeccable technique allows the double-stopping to 'ring', and the devilish trilling to disclose virtuosity always at the service of a musical end. Invigoratingly characterised, the multi-sectional finale is a tour de force, Chandler's embellishments joyous and lightly worn. Throughout, the continuo support is pertinently judged.

With theorbo, Baroque guitar, and harpsichord, the plucked contingent invites ear-catching variety; but, unaccompanied in the E minor Sonata, Chandler's soliloquising is given free rein to probe Tartini's programmatic fancies. And in the cello-accompanied sonata, he and Vladimir Waltham spark off each other, meaningful dialogue replacing a merely functional bass. Supple and subtle, Chandler's take on *la dolce vita* (and its Mephistophelean flipside) illuminates from first note to last, and the recorded sound is simply superb. *Paul Riley*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Hidden Flame

Works by Beach, C Schumann, Strohl, N Boulanger et al
Yoshika Masuda (cello), HyeJin Kim (piano)
Avie AV2653 72:00 mins

Five of the female composers featured here cover the last 200 years, and a little more if one adds Maria Paradis as author of the famous *Sicilienne*, which is doubtful. Dedicated to Joseph Joachim, Clara Schumann's *Three Romances* of 1853 testify to her profound musical intelligence, suggesting that there was a shared style between Clara and Robert – and who is to say who was influencing whom?

By far the longest work on the disc is the 1892 *Great Dramatic Sonata 'Titus et Bérénice'* by Rita Strohl, a name unknown to me, but a composer of considerable power. The reference is to Racine's tragedy of 1670, although there's no clear, detailed relationship between story and music. Variety there is aplenty, but the two outer movements, both lasting over ten minutes, are a little on the long side.

Amy Beach's Romance of a year later is pretty enough without showing much individuality, while Nadia Boulanger's Three Pieces from 1914 are technically the most impressive, though it should be noted that she later withdrew the second piece (a splendid canon, but obviously not splendid enough to satisfy her high standards). As Caroline Potter's excellent notes suggest, the sense of fun in the last piece may surprise some people. The only contemporary work is Reena Esmail's *one word makes a world*, based on an Indian raga and sporting imaginative swoops and slides. The playing is efficient, but the pianist could have made a sharper distinction between melody and accompaniment, while dynamics are sometimes ignored, notably the *ppp morendo* ending Beach's Romance. Most disappointing is the lovely *Sicilienne*, taken too slowly and short on charm. *Roger Nichols*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Dare devil: Adrian Chandler and La Serenissima tackle sonatas by Tartini

LEONARDDE SERRES, LIA VITTONE

Instrumental

INSTRUMENTAL CHOICE

Debonair Bach with Gallic charm

Kate Bolton-Porciatti is swept up in Demarquette's second solo Bach outing

Bach

The Complete Cello Suites
Henri Demarquette (cello)
Evidence EVCD115 131:00 mins (2 discs)

Best-known for his performances of contemporary music, French cellist Henri Demarquette has also spent a lifetime with Bach, having played the Cello Suites since his early childhood. He first recorded them in 2002 and now returns to them seasoned with life's experience.

His approach here has a debonair confidence – just as fresh and vital as the youthful version but the sound now is fuller, riper, and more present in the recorded perspective. One perceives the lingering influences of the great French cellists: the finesse, lyricism and poetry of Pierre Fournier; the richly shaded tone and articulate phrasing of Paul Tortelier.

His reading of the G major Suite encapsulates the flexibility and variety of his approach. He despatches the Prelude with improvisatory bravado and more than a dash of rubato, recalling the prelude's origins as an extemporised 'warm-up' exercise. He balances lyricism and poetry to eloquent effect in the Allemande, while the Courante and Sarabande gambol and ruminate by turns. The paired Minuets trip and curtsey with refined French gallantry before the final, feisty Gigue.

Throughout, Demarquette shows a particular sensitivity to Baroque style with his rhetorical phrasing, spare use of vibrato, and responsiveness to the vacillating affects of different keys. His tendency to sustain or swell on cadence notes becomes a trifle mannered but barely detracts from his ability to paint pictures with myriad shades and supple bowing techniques. From his noble Stradivari cello he draws a rich, velvet sound and exploits the instrument's sonorous resonances to build majestic musical edifices. The performance is superbly recorded in the glowing acoustic of the Chapelle du Méjan in Arles.

The album balances lyricism and poetry to eloquent effect

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Fuller and riper: Demarquette is an experienced Bach advocate

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

Bach

Organ Works, Vol. 5
Masaaki Suzuki (organ)
BIS BIS 2661 (CS/SACD) 65:00 mins

There's no doubting the heft of the organ that Christoph Treutmann the Elder built for St Georg's Grauhof during the second decade of Bach's employment in Leipzig. Its reedy 'pleno', if over-deployed (and relayed at high volume), can sound a little like a heavy wardrobe being shifted by some over-enthusiastic removal men. As he works his way through a survey of Bach's organ works, Masaaki Suzuki is evidently made of stern stuff given his penchant for its 'all guns blazing' plenitude. This fifth instalment is a companion volume to its predecessor: both share portions of the *Orgelbüchlein*; both wrap the chorale preludes around three imposing preludes and fugues; and both share the same rumbustious instrument.

For all its sonic splendours, perhaps some of the disc's most potent pleasures, nonetheless, are to be found in the most intimate numbers. Tremulant-enriched, the chorale preludes on *Liebster Jesus, wir sind hier* share an ethereal breathiness, and particularly eloquent is the plaintive *Ich ruf zu dir*, tempo and registration beautifully judged. Suzuki is also achingly expressive as he negotiates the imploring cantilena that embellishes *Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein* – and how thoughtfully he probes Bach's striking musical imagery depicting Adam's fall *(Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt)*.

The three great preludes and fugues are a bit of a mixed bag, however. The D major ensures a scintillating opening to the disc, the flourishes at the end of the Prelude's dramatic conclusion pungently flamboyant. But the Fugue, heavily registered throughout, becomes a little wearing despite Suzuki's flair. And while the Fugue of the B minor BWV 544 is inexorably purposeful, there's an unrelenting urgency to the Prelude that shortchanges its sinewy grandeur. Best is the grandiloquent account of the C major BWV 545: taut, magisterial, and celebratory.
Paul Riley

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Philip Glass

Cocteau Trilogy: Orphée; La belle et la bête; Les enfants terribles
Katia & Marielle Labèque (pianos)
DG 4875369 96:40 mins (2 discs)

In 2020 the Labèque sisters recorded a scintillating account of the two-piano suite distilled by Michael Riesman from Philip Glass's dance opera

Les enfants terribles, one of three mixed-media pieces from the mid-1990s adapted from the works of Jean Cocteau. That performance is now reissued alongside two new distillations from its trilogy companions: and as soon as the *Orphée* selection begins, it's obvious that the Labèques' relish for Glass's romping arpeggios, motoric rhythms and common or tricky harmonic shifts is undimmed.

Whether the music adapted from *Orphée* and *La belle et la bête* has the power of the score for *Les enfants terribles* is another matter. Part of that distillation's success lay in the fact that the two-piano lineup was only one piano short of the three required for the opera. Glass's other Cocteau creations deployed larger ensembles, making shrinkage less easy. When the music is fast and motoric, the two pianos lay bare its mechanics without loss of excitement. The downside is especially apparent in the final *Orphée* track, where the textures are as threadbare as the notes.

Les enfants also benefits from more compatible material. Its pressurised drama unfolds in an enclosed domestic environment, duly mirrored in Glass's artfully constricted musical world. Neither sibling, drawn from Greek myth and a fairy tale, is able to summon the same powerful feeling of being musically and dramatically locked in a box. Still, the Labèques don't differentiate, and give every arpeggio and twirling phrase exactly the same sparkle and love. *Geoff Brown*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Hensel

Charakterstücke – Works for Solo Piano
Sontraud Speidel (piano)
ARS ARS38648 57:00 mins

Hensel or Mendelssohn? Either, both, take your pick; her music is splendid. This is the indomitable Fanny, sister of the more famous Felix, named Hensel following her marriage to the artist Sebastian. These short piano works, recorded as long ago as 1985, included some that Sontraud Speidel was bringing to the studio for the first time; this would explain why, for instance, there are just four pieces from *Das Jahr,* which has since been recorded in full by others, notably Lauma Skride. The term 'character pieces' seems to be Speidel's, rather than Hensel's, but proves a useful term for selections from a range of different sources.

Speidel made several albums of Hensel's works, and this is the best of them that I have yet heard: the works on it are mainly superb and have been well 'curated' for contrast and colour, while her playing is full of conviction and Romantic flair that suits the music well. Unfortunately, information about the exact circumstances of the original recording seems lost, so although the piano is credited as a Bechstein, it sounds more like a 19th-century fortepiano, bringing an intimate, rather overtone-laden drawing-room quality to the atmosphere.

The opening Sonatensatz, H-U 44, is rather episodic, but there are some gems among the collections of mélodies and lieder (some of those songs are now becoming well known in their original form). I could envisage such pieces as the *Andante soave,* Op. 5 No. 6, or the *Allegro molto quasi presto* Op. 4 No. 3 achieving a strong following. As for *Das Jahr,* the extracts are a delight, especially the skittish 'February' for Carnival season. *Jessica Duchen*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★

Medtner

Sonata Romantica, Op. 53 No. 1; Sonata Minacciosa, Op. 53 No. 2; Sonata Idyll, Op. 56; When Roses Fade
Benjamin Bertin (piano)
ATMA ACD22894 58:23 mins

Despite strong advocacy from some very influential pianists, the music of Russian composer Nikolai Medtner still hovers unfairly on the fringes of the concert repertoire. Yet the jibe that he was merely a poor man's Rachmaninov is way off the mark. True, Medtner's melodic gifts are never quite as distinctive as those of his great contemporary. But once you get under the skin and substance of his musical language, it's impossible not to become mesmerised by his achievements.

Indeed, I can think of no better introduction to Medtner's output than the final three of his 14 piano sonatas, all of which were composed

Smooth Cocteau: the Labèques' Glass is full of flavour

in self-imposed exile in Paris and London between 1929 and 1937. Their strikingly different moods, ranging from the expansive and lyrical *Sonata Romantica* and the frenzied *Sonata Minacciosa* to the more reflective, even childlike *Sonata Idyll,* make for such a musically satisfying recital programme that it seems astonishing that no previous pianist has featured them together on one disc.

Benjamin Bertin should be applauded for his enterprise in selecting these works for his recording debut. He certainly has all the technical acumen and intellectual control to bring exemplary clarity to Medtner's often densely contrapuntal textures, and the recording quality is wonderfully warm. What's missing, however, is a willingness to take risks and allow the music to have greater ebb and flow, and more urgent emotional impulse. The differences are particularly marked in direct comparison with Steven Osborne's recording for Hyperion of the *Sonata Romantica,* which at almost every turn gives us a far more exciting visceral experience. A similar issue unfortunately arises in the *Sonata Minacciosa,* where Geoffrey Tozer's highly charged playing on Chandos carries an almost claustrophobic urgency that is only intermittently projected by Bertin. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Black and White

Works by Debussy, Chopin, Beethoven, Satie
Ashley Wass (piano)
Orchid Classics ORC100288 41:00 mins

Black and White. It is hard to discern whether the title of Ashley Wass's modestly proportioned download-only album of piano favourites refers to anything more than the instrument's keyboard. From the selection of music, it certainly is not a metaphor in the manner of Paul McCartney's and Stevie Wonder's 'Ebony and Ivory'. Nor do the resonant, soft-focus recording and (self-)indulgent approach to performance counter any suggestion of things being clear-cut. Wass stretches every moment of Fauré's 'Après un rêve' like a ham actor trying to fake sincerity.

According to the blurb, he selected pieces 'that originally ignited his passion for the piano', and wishes to 'share the gift of music with his young children'. These are admirable aims, and there is no questioning Wass's sincerity. There is nothing wrong with any of the individual pieces. Bach's C major Prelude, the opening movement of Beethoven's 'Moonlight' Sonata, Schumann's 'Träumerei', Debussy's 'Clair de lune', Satie's first *Gnossienne* and Chopin's C sharp minor Nocturne

YANNICK PERRIN, UMBERTO NICOLETTI

are all wonderful pieces for anyone to hear and to be prompted to learn. That more recent noodlings, such as Einaudi's *Nuvole Bianche* or Max Richter's *Written on the Sky*, are ways in for people should not be knocked.

The trouble is that an album comprising exclusively slow-moving, reflective pieces gives a decidedly one-dimensional sense of what music can do. One or two helpings of well-made blancmange can be a treat, but not an entire meal. Is there nothing lively or quirky that made Wass passionate or that might engage his or anyone else's children? Black and white? Grey and beige are the colours that more readily spring to mind. *Christopher Dingle*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★★

Altered states: Piers Lane journeys through winding Russian variations

Russian Variations

Works by Tchaikovsky, Glazunov, Rachmaninov, Field
Piers Lane (piano)
Hyperion CDA68428 80:36 mins

Russian Variations is the title, but we start with a composer born in Ireland. Inventor of the piano Nocturne, John Field had a strong connection to Russia: he made St Petersburg his home in his twenties and he was buried in Moscow after his death in 1837. His *Variations on a Russian Folk Song* – flowing, lyrical and tinged with aching melancholy, perfectly captured here by Piers Lane – make an excellent six-minute scene setter for this album.

After that we're plunged into variations on a grander scale, with music by three of the big names of the Romantic era and early 20th century: Glazunov, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov. With playing that's never less than well-considered, gleaming and enjoyable, Lane is an excellent guide to these impassioned worlds – although at times, particularly in the Rachmaninov, there's a sense of safety and polish that smooths off the edges.

Still, Lane keeps the spotlight on the composers, and it's wonderful to see just what vivid and varied tapestries they could weave from a single thematic thread. Glazunov's stark, sombre, possibly Finnish theme, with its falling third, transforms into cascading ripples, contrapuntal Baroque lines, a lilting pastoral gilded with bells in his Theme and Variations, Op. 72.

Tchaikovsky focuses less on traditional variation form and more on poetic character in his *Six morceaux composés sur un seul thème*, Op. 21, evoking Schumann and Bach, and giving us a funeral march that meditates on grief, building up into a Dies Irae-inspired frenzy that needed a slightly wilder spirit from Lane. And to close, Rachmaninov's *Variations on a Theme of Chopin*, which spins its C minor theme into a demanding half hour of pianistic challenges, navigated with seeming ease by Lane. *Rebecca Franks*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★

Soundscape

John Corigliano: Fantasia on an Ostinato; Etude Fantasy; **Philip Glass:** Metamorphosis One & Two; **Brian Field:** Three Passions for our Tortured Planet
Kay Kyung Eun Kim (piano)
Steinway STNS30230 55:18 mins

For her debut release on Steinway Records, South Korean pianist Kay Kyung Eun Kim has turned to New York, where she lived while studying at Juilliard and the Manhattan School of Music. The *Soundscape* of the title encompasses classic minimalism via Philip Glass, and its recent incarnation in music by composer-activist Brian Field – as well as its absorption and counter-development in the wry, eclectic post-modernism of John Corigliano.

Glass's 'Metamorphosis One' and 'Two' set the scene. Taken from his 1988 five-movement piano suite, and imbued with a cool clarity by Kim, the now-trademark spooling arpeggios and chord sequences have a melancholy that feels remarkably apropos our times. Harmonic gear shifts within and between the two pieces seem not so much a result of simple patterning as manifestations of a continuity subject to fracture.

Based on a theme from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, Corigliano's 1985 *Fantasia on an Ostinato* seems to offer the same from a very different perspective. In part propelled by his 'mixed feelings' about minimalism (at once 'attractive' and 'hypnotic', yet with 'excessive repetition and emotional sterility'), it's a brilliant work. Kim rises superbly to the challenge of its performer-driven structure – as she does to its technical demands and that of the ensuing five-part Etude Fantasy (1976), Corigliano's thundering cascades and piquant filigree equally lucid.

Field's *Three Pieces for our Tortured Planet* (2019) was written for Kim as a global call to climate-change action. A symbol of hope in the midst of despair, its unshowy journey through 'Fire', 'Glaciers' and 'Winds' has been undertaken by tens of pianists thus far, with composer royalties donated to the Union of Concerned Scientists. *Steph Power*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

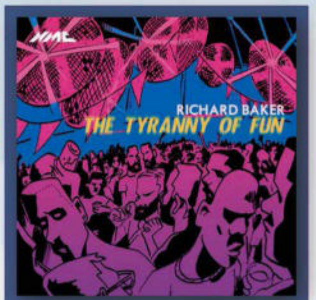
BACKGROUND TO...
Philip Glass *Cocteau Trilogy*

From 1991 to '96, Philip Glass devoted his considerable energies to a triptych of operas that drew on the work of the French writer and film director Jean Cocteau. Glass based his trilogy on three Cocteau works in particular: the 1950 film *Orphée*, which itself drew on Gluck's opera *Orfeo ed Euridice*; the 1946 film *La Belle et la Bête (Beauty and the Beast)*; and the 1929 novel (and later film) *Les Enfants terribles*. The three works also nod to Les Six, the group of French composers (including Poulenc and Milhaud) who worked closely with the writer/director.

BEN EALOVEGA, GETTY

NMC

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS
OF SUPPORTING NEW MUSIC



NMC D275 **OUT NOW**

Richard Baker: The Tyranny of Fun

The latest release in NMC's Debut Disc series comes from one of the foremost composer-conductors of his generation, **Richard Baker**. *The Tyranny of Fun* is collection of Baker's vibrant, provocative chamber works composed between 1994 and 2022, performed by a range of musical forces including the **Birmingham Contemporary Music Group**, and the **Choir of King's College, Cambridge**.

NMC D277 **19 APRIL**

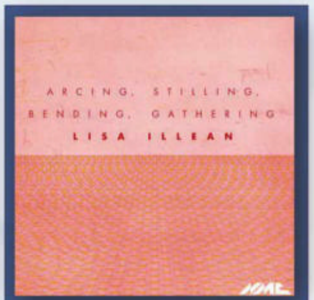
Michael Zev Gordon: The Impermanence of Things

Michael Zev Gordon is a composer whose music is deeply engaged with the subjects of memory and loss, together with a search for serenity. These themes are central to the three large-scale works which comprise this new portrait album, featuring the **BBC Symphony Orchestra**, the **London Sinfonietta**, and his Violin Concerto played by **Carolin Widmann**.

NMC D281 **17 MAY**

Anthony Payne: Visions and Journeys

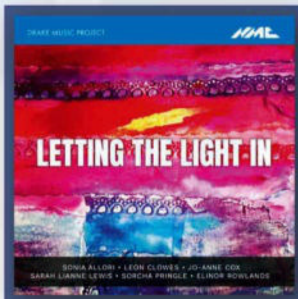
Days before his sudden death in 2021, composer **Anthony Payne** spoke with NMC's Founder Colin Matthews about plans for a future album of his unreleased orchestral works. NMC is pleased to be able to pay tribute to Payne and his close relationship with the **BBC Symphony Orchestra** with the release of this new collection.



NMC D264 **6 JUNE**

Lisa Illean: arcing, stilling, bending, gathering

Lisa Illean has been described as a composer who "shows an extraordinary sensitivity to colour and timbre, and creates an absorbing sound-world which lingers after listening." (*Australian Art Music Awards*). NMC present Illean's debut portrait album, which features exquisite performances from **Explore Ensemble**, **GBSR Duo**, soprano **Juliet Fraser**, and **Sydney Symphony Orchestra**.



NMC D283 **14 JUNE**

letting the light in

Six Disabled composers collaborate with Welsh pianist **Siwan Rhys** to create new cutting-edge works for piano: **Sorcha Pringle**, **leon clowes**, **Elinor Rowlands**, **Sarah Lianne Lewis**, **Jo-anne Cox**, and **Sonia Allori**.

A partnership between NMC, Drake Music Scotland, the Disabled Artist Network, and Tŷ Cerdd, supported by PRS Foundation's *Beyond Borders* Fund 2023.

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Registered Charity no. 328052

www.nmcrec.co.uk

@nmcrecordings

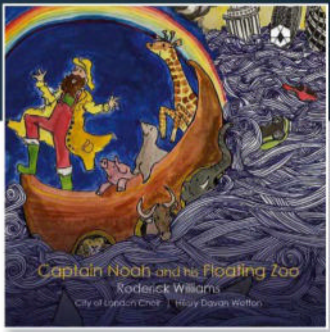
New on Orchid Classics

ORCHID CLASSICS

ORC100294

Erin Morley/Gerald Martin Moore

The long-awaited debut solo album from one of the world's most sought after coloratura sopranos, drawing on connections to the natural world.



ORC100293

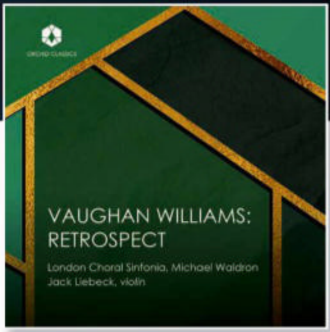
Roderick Williams/City of London Choir/Hilary Davan Wetton

Joseph Horovitz's cantata, Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo, brought to life in a characterful and stylistic collaboration.

ORC100284

Jack Liebeck/Anna Tilbrook

Hidden gems for violin and piano in an exploration of the work of lesser-known composer Frederick Laurence.



ORC100289

London Choral Sinfonia/Michael Waldron/Jack Liebeck/Thomas Carroll/Andrew Staples

A collection of works for choir and string orchestra, featuring the rarely performed Concerto Accademico, and the seminal "Silent Noon" in a world-premiere arrangement for strings.

find out more at www.orchidclassics.com

Jazz

Garry Booth is touched by the flute's profound sadness but ends up *Smiling*

JAZZ CHOICE

Flute from the hip

Shabaka trades in the sax for the keyless flute in all its forms – and the results are fruitful

Been there, done sax: Shabaka Hutchings plays flutes from around the world

Shabaka Hutchings

Perceive its Beauty, Acknowledge its Grace

Shabaka Hutchings (flutes), Jason Moran (piano), Nasheet Waits (drums), Carlos Niño (percussion) plus guests Esperanza Spalding (bass), Miguel Atwood-Ferguson (strings) et al
Impulse! 602465050356 46:45 mins

Hearing last year that Shabaka intended laying down his sax in favour of the flute came as a shock. The 39 year-old was defined by the ferocity of his horn playing as leader of Sons of Kemet and The Comet Is Coming. His conversion to non-western (keyless) flutes like the Japanese shakuhachi, Andean quena and Slavic svirel was the result of practising in open spaces and connecting with nature, he said.

To retain the natural vibe in the studio for this flute-forward session, Shabaka invited a diverse selection of friends to jam together, with no headphones or separation in the room. The result is a beautiful, semi-acoustic and universal folk music that's shot through with sadness.

On 'As the Planets and the Stars Collapse', Shabaka plays a haunting top line, accompanied by harpists Brandee Younger and Charles Overton, the whole washed with strings. 'I'll Do Whatever You Want', with synth player Samuel Shepherd and Shabaka's flute bro' rapper André 3000, has the ominous ambience of a deep-sea dive.

The set as a whole suggests that Shabaka hasn't dialled down his intensity – instead, he's rechannelled it into something more profound. ★★★★★

GETTY

May round-up

UK soprano sax virtuoso ***Rob Cope*** called his sophomore album ***Gemini*** after the change-loving star sign, because it represents his transformation from classical to jazz student. The title is also apt because Cope is joined at the hip creatively with tenorist and teacher Andy Scott, while Liam Noble (piano) and Paul Clarvis (drums) are themselves longstanding collaborators. What bright joyful energy the bassless quartet generates across 12 highly original miniature pieces. The combination of challenging interplay and dazzling solo improvisation simply fizzes. Chamber jazz needed an injection of modern life – and here it is. *(Ubuntu Music UBU0160)* ★★★★★

The brass lineup on ***Mark Lockheart***'s new album ***Smiling***, which includes French horn, suggests something along the lines of *The Birth of The Cool*. In fact, the saxophonist brought together some of the UK's finest brass and wind players for a largely acoustic jazz fusion workout. There are no keyboards, and only guitarist John Parricelli and bassist Tom Herbert needed to plug in. On 'Morning Smiles' Rowland Sutherland's flute solo sets the agenda for a programme of alt fusion that's simultaneously sophisticated and streetwise. Strong tunes fitted to harmony-rich but solo-friendly arrangements make for a rewarding sonic journey that rocks. *(Edition Records EDN 1233)* ★★★★

The ten sparkling original pieces that ***Lynne Arriale*** wrote for ***Being Human*** are all dedicated to people that inspire her – like climate activist Greta Thunberg and Ukrainian nurse Khrystyna Lopatenko. But there's nothing maudlin in Arriale's music. From the neon lit blues of 'Soul' (for poet Amanda Gorman) to the calypso-tinged celebration of 'Joy' (for author Brené Brown), the three- to four-minute paeans are positively therapeutic. 'Curiosity' (for physicist Jacob Barnett) has a teetering, experimental spikiness. Arriale's laser like execution throughout is magnified by the locked-in accompaniment of bassist Alon Near and drummer Lukasz Zyta. *(Challenge Records CR73572)* ★★★★

Vibraphonist ***Joel Ross*** is part of the new wave that's revitalised the Blue Note Records roster under CEO Don Was. His fourth release, ***Nublues***, as the title suggests, puts a different spin on the blues-based jazz pioneered by the label. It's not a tribute act, though. Ross gave his group, a quintet featuring alto star Immanuel Wilkins, space to distil the collective bebop sound to its blue essence. They've arrived at a luminous post-modern perspective on bop that Blue Note founders Alfred Lion and Francis Wolff would recognise – and applaud. (Blue Note 602458376623) ★★★★

Singer ***James Hudson*** says that his concept for new release ***Moonray*** was to combine the swinging sounds of the George Shearing Quintet with the vocal style of Mel Tormé's classic 1950s albums made with bandleader Marty Paich and his Dek-Tette. For fans of the Velvet Fog, as Tormé was known, that might seem an ambitious objective, but they won't be at all disappointed. Hudson's light but precise vocals ride easily on Tom Smith's airy arrangements for septet, across a programme of mostly familiar standards. As dinner jazz goes, it's certainly Michelin starred. *(ECN Music ECN011)* ★★★

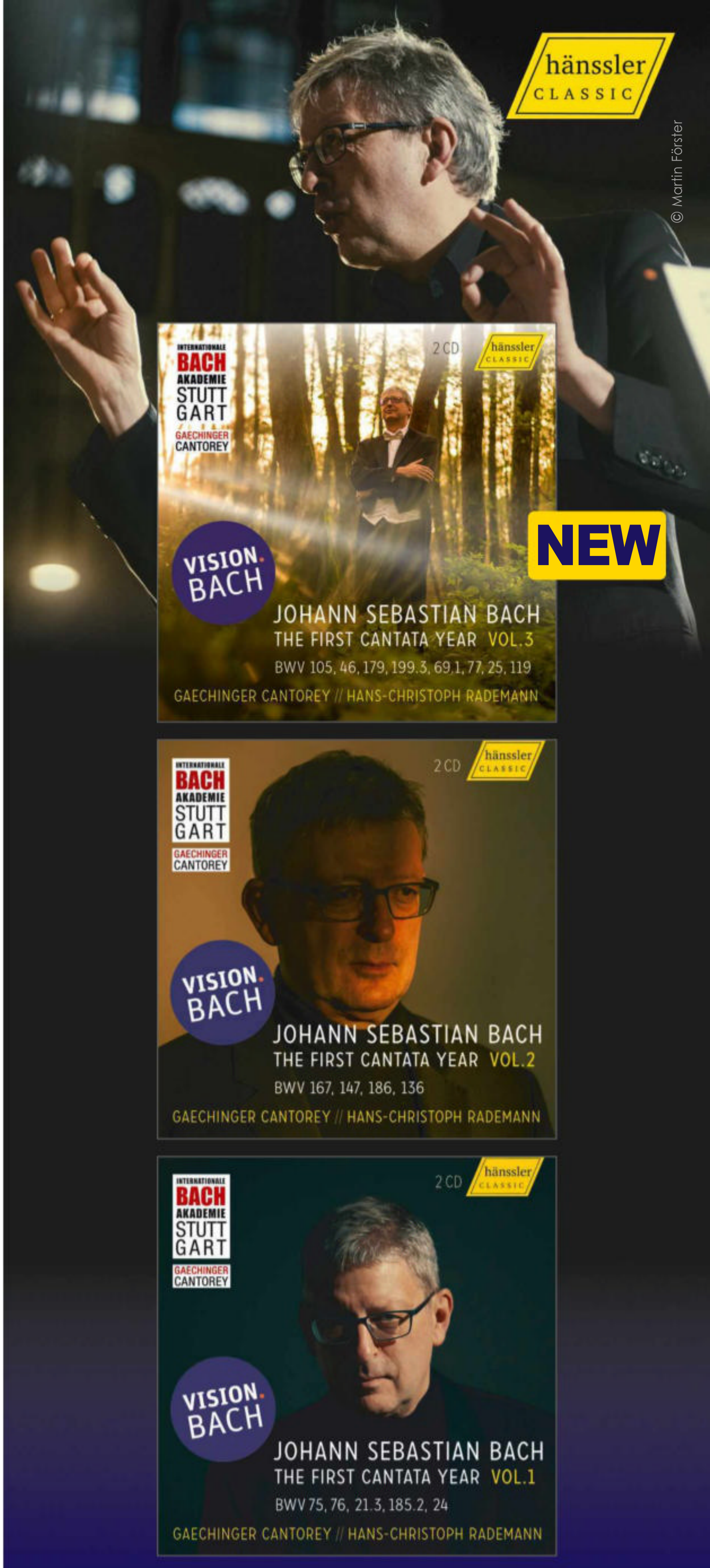
3 exciting Spring releases from OUR Recordings

Catalogue No. 8.226919 Release April 5.
SIX World premiere recordings, with the multiple award winning guitar duo, Aros Guitar Duo, capturing the sound of Aarhus.

Catalogue No. 9.70884 Digital EP Release April 19.
Music of Empathy: A cross-cultural collaboration between a Danish composer who's never been to Ukraine and a refugee violinist, far from her war torn home.

Catalogue No. 8.226920 Release May 3.
A patchwork of J.S. Bach and Symphonic Rock music from the 60th and 70th

OUR Recordings
www.ourrecordings.com
Worldwide distribution: www.naxos.com



VISION.BACH
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH – The First Leipzig Cantata Cycle
Gaechinger Cantorey • Hans-Christoph Rademann
Vol. 1: 2 CD HC23025 • Vol. 2: 2 CD HC23026 • Vol. 3: 2 CD HC23027

CD – DOWNLOAD – STREAM
www.haensslerprofil.de
Haenssler Alliance Distribution

Brief notes

This month's choice includes Fux, folk and a journey along the 40th Parallel

Pedigree performer: Jonathan Fournel plays Mozart with pace and precision

Bach Complete Sonatas & Partitas

Linus Roth (violin)

Evil Penguin EPRC 0062

The pandemic inspired a spate of solo Bach recordings, and Roth joins the fray in these polished, reedy and characterful interpretations. Tempos tend to be on the slower side, but the works don't suffer for it – Roth leans into Bach's gorgeous spread chords and juicy harmonies with atypical, yet inspired, rubato choices and tonal variation. (CS) ★★★★★

Beach • John Corigliano Violin Sonatas

Usha Kapoor (violin), Edward Leung (piano) *Resonus Classics RES10321*

This lovely programme sets Beach's lush and romantic Violin Sonata against the spikier, more rhythmically driven Corigliano. Kapoor's tone is pleasingly sweet and bright in the upper register with unexpected depth on the lower strings, while pianist Leung is impressive in Corigliano's dramatic sections. Contrasts between violence and tender heartache are especially well drawn. (CS) ★★★★

Bonis Complete music for flute and piano

Mario Ancillotti (flute), Eliana Grasso (piano) *Brilliant Classics 96927*

The Flute Sonata is a large, ambitious work, in which flute and piano trade complex melodies and motifs. The Trois Mélodies, originally for soprano and piano, give the flute some adventurous tonal workouts. This is atmospheric late-Romantic salon music, even if across a whole album the flute struggles for the same timbral variety achieved by other solo instruments. (SW) ★★★

Peter Boyer Rhapsody in Red, White and Blue

Jeffrey Biegel (piano); London Symphony Orchestra/Peter Boyer

Naxos 9.70359

Composed to mark the centenary of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, Peter Boyer's boisterous 17-minute work for piano and orchestra is set to be toured round all 50 US states. The jazz-meets-Romantic element of the Gershwin is here, but little of the witty interplay between the piano and orchestra. Nor, I suspect, will Jeffrey Biegel have found himself particularly taxed by the fairly workaday solo piano part. (JP) ★★★

Covatti • Dussaut • Honegger • D'Indy Sonatas for Violin and Piano

Marie Radauer-Plank (violin), Henrike Brüggen (piano)

Audax ADX11208 62:00 mins

Hélène Covatti's (1910-2005) Violin Sonata is light, airborne and faintly mysterious, mixing Fauré, Debussy and folk inflections from the composer's native Greece. The Brüggen-Plank Duo's sinuous playing and perfect balance project its mysteries with perfect clarity. Honegger's Sonata is similarly impressionistic, but adds the mercurial energy of its *Presto*. We end with D'Indy's soulful, questing *Andante*. (SW) ★★★★

Fux • Pergolesi Kaiserrequiem; Missa in D

I Pizzicanti, Zeronove/Lukas Wanner

Prospero PROSP0085

Composed for the Austrian royal family in the 1720s, Fux's *Kaiserrequiem* is a restrained affair, with even the Dies Irae seemingly projecting a world very much at ease with itself. It's a pleasant listen but the live performance here, as with Pergolesi's Missa in D, has its unsteady moments plus the occasional throaty contribution from the audience. (JP) ★★★

W Kaufman Piano Concerto No. 3; Symphony No. 3 et al

Elisaveta Blumina (piano); Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra/David Robert Coleman *CPO 555631-2*

Walter Kaufmann (1907-1984) spent a decade in India, a sojourn audible in the beguiling *Six Indian Miniatures* with its sinuous raga-inspired melodies. Elsewhere, the Third Piano Concerto's outer movements fizz with a Stravinskian energy and wit. Add some beautifully balanced orchestral playing, and the result is a fascinating East-West synthesis. (SW) ★★★★

Mozart Piano Concertos Nos 18 & 21

Jonathan Fournel (piano); Mozarteum Orchestra/Howard Griffiths

Alpha ALPHA1039

Featuring 2021 Queen Elisabeth Competition winner Fournel, this pairing of two of Mozart's most winning piano concertos has real pedigree. The orchestral strings are warm, yet fastidiously vibrato-free, against which Fournel's keyboard is precise and muscular. Speeds are driven in a vibrant and cheerful recording. (CS) ★★★★

Prokofiev Symphony No. 3

London Symphony Orchestra/Gianandrea Noseda

LSO Live LSO0391-D

Adapted from his opera about demonic possession, Prokofiev's Third should be a hair-raising experience – and Noseda and the LSO oblige. They burrow right into the first movement's teeming, malevolent energy – the various themes crossing each other are beautifully balanced, their jarring climax deliciously infernal – while the strings swirl and swoop like fireflies in the restless third movement. (SW) ★★★★★

MARCO BORGGREVE, GETTY

Raff World's End • Judgement • New World
Andreas Wolf (bass-baritone) et al; Camerata Lipsiensis/Gregor Meyer
CPO 555562-2 (2 discs)

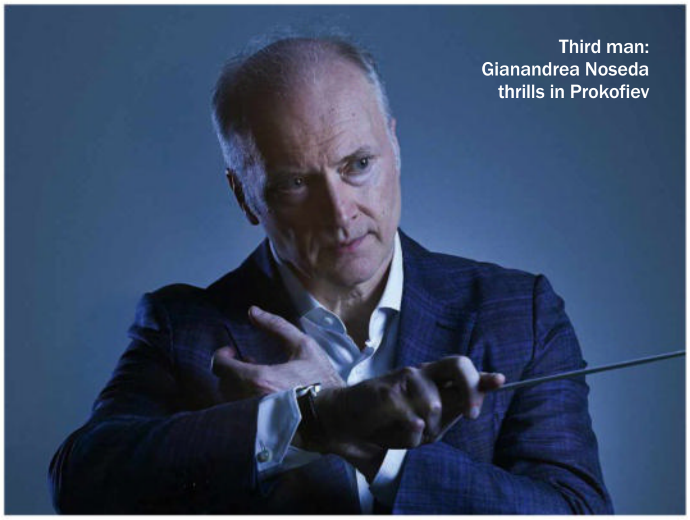
Raff's 1882 choral take on the Apocalypse interweaves lengthy recitative with choruses and orchestral intermezzos, the latter of which have an occasional Wagnerian feel to them. The lion's share of the narrative work falls to baritone Andreas Wolf, whose anodyne presentation tests the patience after a while. (JP) ★★★

Max Richter Recomposed: Vivaldi's Four Seasons
Stift Festival Orchestra/Daniel Rowland (violin/director)
Challenge Classics CC72978

Even 12 years after its release, Max Richter's minimalist, postmodern take on a most recognisable classic continues to provoke and delight. Daniel Rowland is a magnetic advocate in a bold interpretation that emphasises the flighty, bird-like quality of Richter's looped phrases with a headlong quality of abandon. (CS) ★★★★

Absolutely... Ennio Morricone II Original arrangements and music for cello, flute and piano
Luca Pincini (cello), Gilda Buttà (piano) et al *Da Vinci Classics 6091657*

Though known primarily for his cinematic soundtracks, Morricone was a complicated composer, who also wrote experimental works for the concert hall – and who adapted his own film scores for solo and chamber lineups. This second volume showcases his dazzling variety, striding tender tunefulness and unsettling atonality. The playing by all three instrumentalists is excellent. (CS) ★★★★



Third man: Gianandrea Noseda thrills in Prokofiev

Carnival Works by R Schumann, Scriabin, Alkan, Schoenberg et al
Yixiang Hou (piano)
KNS Classical KNS A/139

A boldly eclectic programme, ranging across centuries and styles from Gibbons's Pavan in G minor to Schoenberg's Three Pieces, Op. 11. Pianist Yixiang Hou has something to say about most of them. The one disappointment is the album's closing big hitter, Schumann's *Carnaval*, where Hou doesn't find enough colour to rival, say, Uchida or Arrau. (SW) ★★★

Collection Schumann Works with wind instruments
Théo Fouchenneret (piano), Philibert Perrine (oboe) et al *B *records LBM058*

This gently probing music for piano and winds mostly lacks the volatility that gives Schumann's solo piano and piano-led chamber music such appeal. That said, horn and piano complement each other beautifully in the *Adagio and Allegro*, while the finale of the *Andante and Variations* comes close to the energy and emotion of vintage Schumann. (SW) ★★★

O'er the Moor Songs and Dances from Scotland and Ireland
Alpha ALPHA1027
The Kraken Consort

From the elegiac beauty of 'Plac'hik Eussa' and the simple spareness of 'Sián le Máigh', an unaccompanied duet for two singers, to the reels and swirls of the instruments-only 'Scottish Set', this makes a superbly varied, captivatingly performed introduction to Scottish and Irish folk, displaying its rich array of moods and styles. Recommended. (JP) ★★★★

Captivating folk: the impressive Kraken Consort

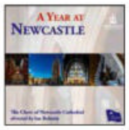
Parallel 40 Works by Komitas, Terry Riley, Tan Dun et al
Belinfante Quartet
7 Mountain Records 7MNTN049DIG

The album's title refers to the line of latitude that runs through Spain, Italy and Greece in the Med, then through the likes of Armenia, China, Japan and the US – providing a colourful and varied programme. Whether dancing along with Skalkottas and Komitas, or mesmerising with the minimalism of Terry Riley, the Belinfante Quartet are on terrific form throughout. (JP) ★★★★★

Solo Music by Abel, Bach, Baltzar, Biber & Ortiz
Sigiswald Kuijken (violin)
Accent ACC24400

At the magnificent age of 80, early music specialist Kuijken proves he is still a formidable performer in this attractive showcase of violin, viola da gamba, violoncello da spalla (a small cello played under the neck) and clavichord music. Throughout, his experience shines through, as he allows the elegant Baroque melodies to do the talking. (CS) ★★★

A Year at Newcastle Choir of Newcastle Cathedral/Ian Roberts
Regent Choral REGCD582



Beginning with Elgar's Benedictus and rounded off by Howell's mighty Te Deum, Newcastle's largely 20th/21st-century choral year takes in the likes of Vaughan Williams and Finzi along the way, alongside less familiar composers such as Kris Thomsett and William Drakett. On this evidence, the cathedral choir is in fine fettle, nicely balanced across the voices and with ample oomph under the bonnet when needed. (JP) ★★★★

Jeremy Pound (JP), Charlotte Smith (CS), Steve Wright (SW)

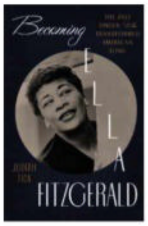
Books

Our critics cast their eyes over the latest selection of books on all things music

Becoming Ella Fitzgerald
Judith Tick

WW Norton 529pp (hb) £30

Are historians necessarily good biographers? It's an interesting question, not least because a



biography of a near-contemporary subject might be expected to take their personal legacy into account; to paraphrase the author Angela Carter, a life well-lived is akin to planting a tree that will hopefully continue to grow and thrive even when we are no longer alive to nurture it.

For her part, Judith Tick is an academic historian with an interest in music, often from the perspective of female practitioners. Given that the jazz biography sector tends to be dominated by journalists, her approach can only be valuable.

This book scrupulously chronicles the rise of jazz doyenne Ella Fitzgerald from the role of 'girl singer' to international acclaim, with meticulous reference to first-hand accounts. While Tick's style is somewhat detached, this isn't really a book for casual reading but is perhaps best treated as a detailed go-to reference source. The downside is that historians study the past, so the book ends with Fitzgerald's death; some exploration of her stylistic influence on subsequent generations of singers wouldn't have hurt. *Roger Thomas* ★★★

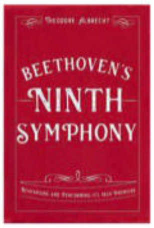
A life in detail: jazz legend Ella Fitzgerald, 1945

GETTY

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: Rehearsing and Performing its 1824 Premiere
Theodore Albrecht

Boydell and Brewer 322pp (hb) £70

It's 200 years since the first performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, one of the pinnacles of western classical music. Reams have been written about both composer and work and yet, as Theodore Albrecht demonstrates, there are still new things to say and myths to dispel. He focuses on the premiere and second performance, which took place in Rossini-mad Vienna on 7 and 23 May 1824, following months of political wranglings about which theatre the composer



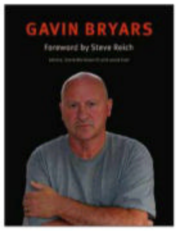
should pick, and endless discussions about concert dates and copyists.

Drawing on his recent landmark translations of Beethoven's conversation books, Albrecht peppers his day-by-day breakdown with everyday observations that bring the story to life. We learn of Beethoven's note to make sure he got a haircut before the premiere; his visit with his nephew Karl to the menagerie to see a white fox, a sloth bear and a lioness; and his pleas for the second violins to pay attention. It's a book of plentiful footnotes and in-depth appendices and perhaps tells us more about musical life in Vienna than the symphony itself – but is no less fascinating and invaluable for that. *Rebecca Franks* ★★★★

Gavin Bryars
David Wordsworth and Leslie East, editors

Kahn and Averill 360pp (hb) £40

When the London Philharmonic Orchestra recently programmed Gavin Bryars's *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet*, the 1971 piece that features a looped recording of an anonymous homeless man



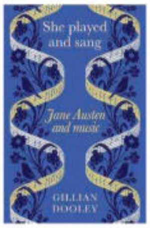
singing a half-remembered hymn, the ensemble had to add a second performance on the same evening due to its popularity. Along with *The Sinking of the Titanic*, which imagines the ship's band continuing to play as the vessel plunges under sea, *Jesus' Blood*... is well known (Tom Waits recorded a version in 1993), but, as this important new book reminds us, Bryars's repertoire is wide ranging.

Early interest in Feldman and Cage fuelled Bryars's own experimentalism (including 'private music', where performers access sources unknown to the audience such as headphones or scents) alongside more traditional stageworks such as *Medea*, the 1982 opera written in Ancient Greek (perhaps not that traditional, then). Because this book is split thematically ('Opera'; 'Dance'; 'Art School'), with different writers, there is some crossover of content – biographical information is scant and for musicological purposes only. Essential reading for understanding – and playing – Bryars's music. *Claire Jackson* ★★★★

She Played and Sang: Jane Austen and Music
Gillian Dooley

Manchester University Press 331pp (hb) £20

Music plays a key part in the writings of Jane Austen, as it did in her life – she bought a piano, played it regularly before breakfast, and copied out 'very pretty tunes', according to her niece Caroline. Gillian Dooley has done the burgeoning world of Austen studies a service by cataloguing



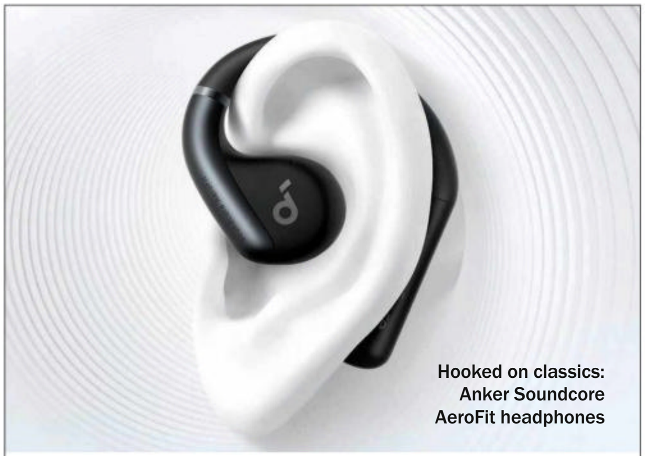
the manuscripts that survive in Austen's hand, all noted here following a digitisation process at Southampton University. The material matches the temper of those times: many minor composers, copious attractive songs, and only occasional glimpses of Mozart, Arne, Grétry and Paisiello.

Dooley seems puzzled by the ambivalence of Austen's attitude to music in her letters and novels, but unpacks some background to her literary subtlety: Austen was often scathing about empty virtuosity in music-making as a metaphor for superficiality, regarding more reserved performance as showing moral superiority. The interesting open question at the end of Dooley's attractively presented book is whether 'the rhetoric of music naturally flowed into the musicality of her prose'. *Nicholas Kenyon* ★★★★

Audio choice

Chris Haslam chooses the best hi-fi equipment for your classical music listening

THIS MONTH: OPEN HEADPHONES



Hooked on classics: Anker Soundcore AeroFit headphones

GREAT VALUE

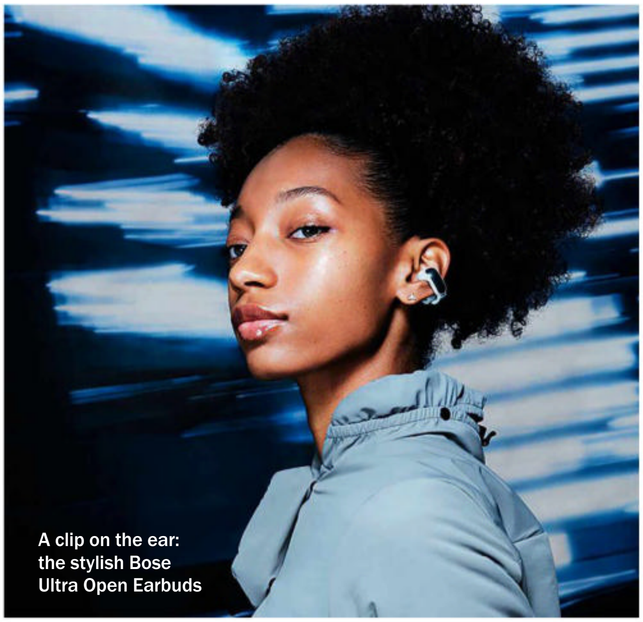
Anker Soundcore AeroFit £99

Designed primarily for sport, but great for anyone who wants to enjoy their music and remain connected to the world around them, the AeroFit weigh a mere 8.2g each and the ear-hook design is most comfortable. Easy to connect, they have a partner app that lets you assign touch controls for each ear, and boast an 11 hr (42 hrs total) battery life and incredibly fast charging. The 14mm drivers do a good job directing music into your ear canal with little sound leakage and there's an enticing fullness to the performance. They're a good-value buy that should help you stay alert and entertained. **soundcore.com**

FIT FOR SPORT

JBL Soundgear Sense £129

At 13g each, these are hefty for wireless earbuds, but the flexible ear-hook design means they're extremely comfortable. The extra weight is down to the huge 16.2mm drivers that project brilliantly into your ears. They also come with a flexible neckband attachment, making them ideal for sports. There are custom controls and EQ adjustments available via the JBL app, and while there's no active noise cancellation, the power of the drivers makes them better for commuting. The battery life is a respectable 6 hrs (18 hrs from the charging case), although given the jumbo size of the case, I had imagined it would be longer. **uk.jbl.com**



A clip on the ear: the stylish Bose Ultra Open Earbuds

BEST IN TEST

Bose Ultra Open Earbuds £299

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE BEST BUY

Part clip-on earring, part headphone, Bose's latest design will divide opinion, but having worn them for the past few weeks I think they're onto something. The battery and drivers are separated by flexible silicone cuffs, and while clipping them onto your lobes feels odd to anyone not familiar with costume jewellery, at 6.5g you soon forget they are there.

Battery life is 7.5 hrs (19.5 hrs in the charging case) and at the end of each battery there's a button that you can assign control to via the Bose app. There are also Spatial Audio modes and Auto Volume, which adjusts the levels as the decibels around you change.

Without the benefit of noise isolation, created by having something inside your ear, Bose has engineered the buds to be highly directional, firing sound directly into your ear canal. They call it Open Audio, and it's leagues ahead of the competition. The performance is surprisingly good given there's nothing inside your ears. They're energetic, with expressive detail across the orchestra, and actual bass. Yes, they're a touch thin compared to the best in-ear designs, and no noise cancellation means they're hopeless on a plane, but for many the compromises will be worth it, given the comfort and just how in-touch with your surroundings you remain. **bose.co.uk**

NEED TO KNOW

What are 'open' headphones?
They are earbuds that don't cover or block the ears completely, enabling you to listen to music while being aware of your surroundings.

Are they like bone conduction headphones?
They both transmit sound without being inside your ears, but bone conduction headphones press against your skull and vibrate sound – tech probably pioneered by Beethoven. They're effective, but the audio quality is compromised.

Don't 'open' headphones leak sound?
The clever directional drivers fire audio into your ears, restricting sound leakage, but they are by no means silent for those around you.

What if I want to shut myself off from the world?
Open headphones aren't for those who crave the blissful calm of active noise cancellation. But it will be interesting to see how the technology evolves, as people realise how nice it is not having anything in or over your ears.

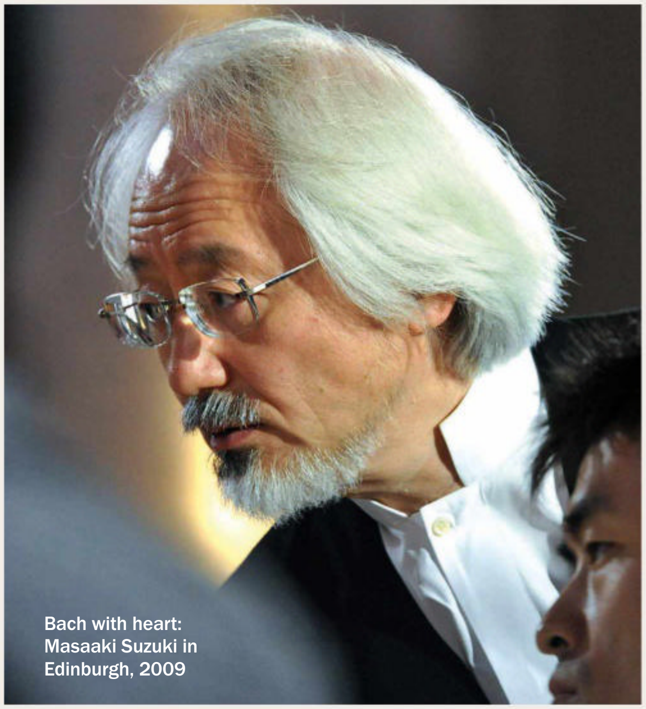
From the archives

Andrew McGregor looks over this month's reissued and live archive recordings

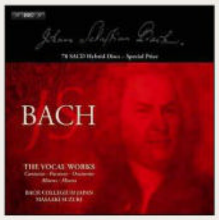
ARCHIVE CHOICE

The complete package

Suzuki's epic recording project comes together in the essential Bach collectors' item



Bach with heart: Masaaki Suzuki in Edinburgh, 2009



Bach – *The Vocal Works*

Complete Cantatas, Passions, Oratorios, Masses & Motets
Bach Collegium Japan / Masaaki Suzuki
BIS BIS9061

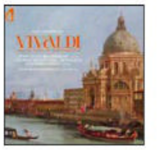
Outside of Japan, most of us hadn't heard of Masaaki Suzuki and his Bach Collegium Japan until the arrival of their first recording of Bach Cantatas, made back in 1995. Eyebrows were raised until we heard the sound they made, and 30 years on we're still listening. Suzuki says his aim is to deliver a message which can touch the human heart, regardless of nationality or cultural tradition. They succeeded triumphantly, with the help of a carefully chosen team of loyal soloists, and the superb recorded sound achieved by the BIS label. It took them 18 years to complete the Church Cantatas; Bach's Secular Cantatas followed in wonderfully entertaining performances, then the Passions, the Oratorios, the B minor and Lutheran Masses, the Motets. It's all here in *Bach – The Vocal Works*, over 90 hours of sublime music in some of the finest performances and recordings you could wish for, at a special price. Surely one of the greatest recording projects of our time and, if you don't already have them, priceless. ★★★★★

May round-up

'Poor, sad angel' was writer George Sand's description of ***Frédéric Chopin*** after their first encounter in Paris, and it's the title of this recital from ***Nikolai Lugansky***, 24 years old when he recorded it in the mid-90s after his success in the Tchaikovsky Competition. Technical mastery is always at Chopin's service: the F minor Ballade has impressive sweep, there's poetry and delicacy in the Nocturnes, character in the Mazurkas and Polonaise… a rewarding recital. *(Fineline Classics FL72417)* ★★★★

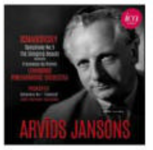
Conductor ***Thomas Jensen*** was a vital presence in Danish music from the 1930s to the 60s, a cellist who played for Sibelius, and a student of Carl Nielsen who became one of the composer's great evangelists. The Danacord label has been releasing Jensen's commercial and radio recordings, and Volume 20 offers no fewer than 12 Danish composers: from overtures by Kuhlau and Gade with the Tivoli Orchestra in the 1940s, to live broadcasts of the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Riisager's suite *Paradise of Fools*, and a thrilling traversal of Holmboe's Seventh Symphony. Decent remastering, a huge variety of styles – and a vital window on Danish music. *(Danacord DACOCD930; 2 CDs)* ★★★★

Jean-Pierre Rampal was a pioneering flautist, with a passion for rediscovering the music of the Baroque. Here's Rampal conducting his former pupil ***Jean-Louis Beaumadier***, principal piccolo of the Orchestre National de France, in the concertos for small flute by ***Vivaldi***. With no period instruments, these slightly polite performances are bass-heavy in places, but things lighten up two decades later for a delightful Vivaldi double concerto with chamber ensemble La Follia, and tucked away at the end there's a Concerto for Five Flutes by Boismortier, a previously unreleased live performance from the complete flute class of Jean-Pierre's father Joseph, reunited in Marseille. *(Indesens IC014)* ★★★

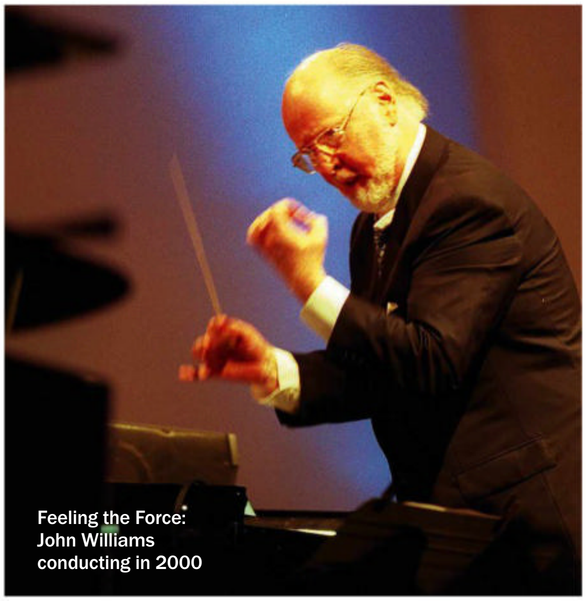


Pianist and composer ***Keith Jarrett*** is an icon in the jazz world, and his stylish performances of JS Bach have brought him huge admiration. But Bach's son ***Carl Philipp Emanuel*** is a different sound world, and in his recordings of CPE's *Württemberg Sonatas*, Jarrett shows that he has a real understanding of the mercurial twists and turns in this transitional music. You never doubt for a second that Jarrett's right when he says he felt there was space for a piano version. Make room for it; the only mystery is why it took so long to release this 1994 recording. *(ECM 4858495; 2 CDs)* ★★★★

Things you might know about Latvian conductor ***Arvīds Jansons***: he was associate conductor of the Leningrad Philharmonic; he was Mariss Jansons' father; Barbirolli appointed him the Hallé's guest conductor (he died while conducting them in 1984); and it's hard to find his recordings. Start here: Jansons and the Leningrad Philharmonic playing ***Tchaikovsky*** live in London in 1971. This was Mravinsky's orchestra, but it's Jansons' sound: more restrained, lyrical, even sweet-toned in comparison, but with muscular vigour, vibrant brass and characterful winds. *The Sleeping Beauty* excerpts are bewitching, and the Fifth Symphony saves the full force of fate to the end. *(ICA Classics ICAC5177; 2 CDs)* ★★★



Andrew McGregor is the presenter of Radio 3's *Record Review*, broadcast each Saturday afternoon from 2pm-4pm



Feeling the Force: John Williams conducting in 2000

GETTY

Unboxed

This month's round-up features a film music legend, and a sophisticated Viennese octet

Born in rural Bohemia, Johann Ladislaus Dussek (1760–1812) led a peripatetic life, travelling Europe as a keyboard virtuoso and settling in several capitals, where he became a fashionable pianist and teacher. Among all this restlessness, however, Dussek forged a reputation as one of the foremost keyboard performers and composers of his age. Expressive and harmonically adventurous, his keyboard sonatas stand poised on the threshold of early Romanticism. These pioneering works are the subject of ***Dussek: Complete Piano Sonatas and Sonatinas*** *(Brilliant Classics 95503, 10 CDs)*. The performances, on period instruments, come from pianists including Bart van Oort, Piet Kuijken and Viviana Sofronitsky.

Universal takes a deep dive into the music of a famed film composer with ***The Legend of John Williams: Original Soundtracks, Concert Works and Songs 1960-2022*** *(Universal 600753991985)*. These 20 CDs span everything from popular theme tunes (performed by the Boston Pops) via Westerns and disaster movie soundtracks *(Earthquake, The Poseidon Adventure, The Towering Inferno)* to the big blockbusters – *E.T.*, *Star Wars*, *Jurassic Park*, *Indiana Jones*. Also included is *Across the Stars*, for which Williams and Anne-Sophie Mutter collaborated in new adapatations of his best-loved film themes. The final discs lead us into the concert hall, and include Williams's concert works, such as the Sinfonietta for Wind Ensemble and Elegy for Cello and Orchestra.

The Wiener Oktett was formed in 1947 by Vienna Philharmonic players including violinist Willi Boskovsky and his clarinettist brother Alfred. Soon enough, the octet was gaining fame for its silvery-toned, uber-Viennese renditions of Beethoven's Septet and the Octet by Schubert. By the 1950s, the group's Decca albums showcased more variety: for every recording of Schubert's 'Trout' Quintet (with Clifford Curzon), there were also works by lesser-known Romantics, and modern composers such as Britten and Hindemith. This artistry and eclecticism is reflected in a new box set, ***Wiener Oktett: The Decca Recordings*** *(Eloquence 484 2220, 27 CDs)*, which traces the octet's chamber-music mastery across several decades, until its final recording in 1972. ***Steve Wright***

Reviews Index

Bacewicz
Concerto for String Orchestra 112
CPE Bach Hamburg symphonies and fantasias 113
Württemberg Sonatas 138
JS Bach Early Cantatas 122
Cello Suites 128
Organ Works, Vol. 5 128
Sonatas and Partitas 134
Violin Concertos 116
Richard Baker Angelus 113
Crank 113
Motet II 113
The Tyranny of Fun 113
Beach Violin Sonata 134
Beethoven 'Coriolan' Overture 113
Symphony No. 3 113
Bertin Fausto 120
Bloch Schelomo 116
Bonis Flute Sonata 134
Trois Mélodies 134
Peter Boyer Rhapsody in Red, White and Blue 134
Brahms Violin Concerto 117
Britten Violin Concerto 117
Suite, Op. 6 117
Two Pieces 117
Bruch Kol Nidrei 116
Busoni Violin Concerto 117
Charpentier David et Jonathas 120
John Corigliano Violin Sonata 134
Couperin Concerts Royaux 125
Covatti Violin Sonata 134
RebeccaDale Night Seasons 122
Debussy Jeux 112
Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune 112
Dohnányi Konzertstück 116
Donizetti Dalinda 121
Duruflé Requiem 123
Dussek Piano Sonatas 139
Dvořák Stabat Mater 123
Enescu
Octet for String Orchestra 112
Fauré Elégie, Op. 24 123
Michael Finnissy
Alternative Readings 125
Botany Bay 125
Wisdom 125
Fux Kaiserrequiem 134
Gay The Beggar's Opera 121
Philip Glass Cocteau Trilogy 128
Marc-André Hamelin
New Piano Works 110
Hensel Charakterstücke 129
Honegger Violin Sonata 134
Janáček Katya Kabanova 121
W Kaufman
Piano Concerto No. 3 134
Six Indian Miniatures 134
Korngold String Sextet 125
Mahler Symphony No. 6 113
Medtner
Sonata Idyll 129
Sonata Minacciosa 129
Sonata Romantica 129
Mendelssohn
Lieder ohne Worte 126
Mozart
Piano Concertos
K238, K242, K246 116
K413, K414, K415 118
K456, K467 134
Flute Concerto No. 2 117
Flute Quartet No. 1 117
Concerto for Flute and Harp 117
Pejačević Canzonetta 126
Piano Trio 126
Sonata for Cello and Piano 126
Pergolesi Missa in D 134
Poulenc Lenten Motets 123
Price String Quartet No. 2 126
Five Folksongs in Counterpoint 126
Prokofiev Symphony No. 3 134
Rachmaninov All-Night Vigil 122
Raff World's End 135
Max Richter Recomposed: Vivaldi's Four Seasons 135
Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto No. 1 118
Scarlatti Stabat Mater 123
Sowerby String Quartet 126
Stanford Cushendall 123
A Fire of Turf 123
A Sheaf of Songs from Leinster 123
R Strauss Josephs Legende 114
Stravinsky Firebird Suite 114
Petrushka 112
Petrushka Suite 114
Tchaikovsky
Sleeping Beauty (excerpts) 138
Souvenir de Florence 126
Symphony No. 5 138
Telemann Ino 124
Overture and Divertimento 124
Sinfonia melodica 124
Vieuxtemps Cello Concerto No. 1 118
Vivaldi Flute Concertos 138
Ysaÿe Harmonies du Soir 112

COLLECTIONS
Absolutely... Ennio Morricone II
Luca Pincini, Gilda Buttà et al 135
American Counterpoints
Curtis Stewart; Experiential Orchestra/James Blachly 118
Bach - The Vocal Works
Bach Collegium Japan/Masaaki Suzuki 138
La Belle Dame
Roderick Williams; BBC Concert Orchestra/John Andrews 124
Black and White Ashley Wass 129
But Not My Soul
Ragazze Quartet 127
Carnival Yixiang Hou 135
Collection Schumann
Théo Fouchenneret et al 135
The Decca Recordings
Wiener Oktett 139
Diavolo La Serenissima/ Adrian Chandler 127
Forgotten Czech Piano Concertos
Marek Kozák; Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra/Robert Jindra 119
Hidden Flame
Yoshika Masuda, HyeJin Kim 127
Thomas Jensen Legacy, Vol. 20
Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra/ Thomas Jensen 138
The Legend of John Williams
Various artists 139
O'er the Moor
The Kraken Consort 135
Parallel 40 Belinfante Quartet 135
Paysage Veronique Gens; Munich Radio Orchestra/Hervé Niquet 124
The Poor, Sad Angel
Nikolai Lugansky 138
Russian Variations Piers Lane 130
Solo Sigiswald Kuijken 135
Soundscape
Kay Kyung Eun Kim 130
A Year at Newcastle
Choir of Newcastle Cathedral/ Ian Roberts 135

TV&Radio

Your guide to what's on BBC Radio 3 this month, plus TV highlights

MAY'S RADIO 3 LISTINGS

BBC RADIO 3 90–93FM

Schedules may be subject to alteration. For up-to-date listings see BBC Sounds and iPlayer

Three to look out for

Gallic grace: Bertrand Chamayou

Sam Jackson, the controller of BBC Radio 3, selects three programme highlights for the month of May

Best of Live

Radio 3 showcases specially recorded live performances and session tracks from the BBC and around the world. May begins with a profile of one of the leading interpreters of French music, pianist Bertrand Chamayou, in concert at LSO St Luke's.
Classical Live, weekdays, 1pm

Discussion and discovery

This month, Jess Gillam's newly extended programme features chats with a wide range of guests such as composer and The National guitarist Bryce Dessner, pianist Arsha Kaviani and songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Olivia Chaney, with music picks to set the mood for your Saturday evening.
This Classical Life, Saturdays, 5pm

A legendary duet

Cellist Kate Kennedy revisits the location and story of the famous 19 May 1924 broadcast, when Beatrice Harrison played live from a Surrey garden alongside a nightingale. She explores the links between birdsong and music, and how the early BBC engineers made that first broadcast happen.
The Story of Beatrice Harrison, 19 May, 7.15pm

1 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
BBC RADIO 3 **CHOICE 1-3pm Classical Live**
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm Composer of the Week Debussy
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from The Glasshouse, Gateshead. R Schumann *Symphony in G minor* , C Schumann *Piano Concerto*, Beethoven *Symphony No.3* . Isata Kanneh-Mason (pf), Royal Northern Sinfonia/Dinis Sousa
9.45-10pm The Essay Cultural Earthquakes
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

2 THURSDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm Composer of the Week Debussy
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Barbican, London. Poulenc *Gloria*, Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique*. BBC Symphony Chorus & Orchestra/ Daniele Rustioni
9.45-10pm The Essay Cultural Earthquakes
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

3 FRIDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm Composer of the Week Debussy
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Friday Night is Music Night
9.45-10pm The Essay Cultural Earthquakes
10-11.30pm Late Junction
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

4 SATURDAY

6.30-9am Saturday Breakfast
9am-12 noon Saturday Morning
12-1pm Earlier... with Jools Holland
1-2pm Music Matters The Land Without Music?
2-4pm Record Review
4-5pm Sound of Cinema
BBC RADIO 3 **CHOICE 5-6pm This Classical Life** Bryce Dessner
6-9.30pm Opera on 3 live from NY Met. John Adams *El Niño*
9.30-10.30pm Music Planet
10.30pm-12.30am New Music Show

5 SUNDAY

6.30-9am Sunday Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12-1.30pm Private Passions
1.30-3pm Sunday Afternoon
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6pm The Early Music Show
6-7.15pm Words and Music
7.15-8pm Between the Ears Odes to Joy
8-10pm Drama on 3
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified

6 MONDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
1-2pm Live from Wigmore Hall
CHOICE 2-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm Composer of the Week CPE Bach
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Barbican, London. Beethoven *Symphonies Nos 2 & 8*, Chin *Piano Concerto*. Bertrand Chamayou (piano), LSO/ François-Xavier Roth
9.45-10pm The Essay Music in Bloom
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

Much to discuss: songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Olivia Chaney

7 TUESDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 2-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW CPE Bach
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff. Barber *Adagio, Violin Concerto*, Ives *Symphony No.2*. Benjamin Baker (violin), BBC NOW/Ryan Bancroft
9.45-10pm The Essay Music in Bloom
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

8 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-3pm Classical Live
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm CotW CPE Bach
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape

GETTY, MARCO BORGGREVE

7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Beethoven *Piano Concerto No.5*, Bruckner *Symphony No.7*. Steven Osborne (piano), BBC Phil/Anja Bihlmaier
9.45-10pm The Essay Music in Bloom
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

9 THURSDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW CPE Bach
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm In Concert from Barbican, London. Raskin *Suite from 'The Bad and the Beautiful'*, Ravel *Piano Concerto in G*, Vaughan Williams *Symphony No.5*. Bertrand Chamayou (pf), LSO/Antonio Pappano
9.45-10pm The Essay Music in Bloom
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

10 FRIDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW CPE Bach
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Friday Night is Music Night
9.45-10pm The Essay Music in Bloom
10-11.30pm Late Junction
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

11 SATURDAY

6.30-9am Saturday Breakfast
9am-12 noon Saturday Morning
12-1pm Earlier... with Jools Holland
1-2pm Music Matters The Land Without Music?
2-4pm Record Review
4-5pm Sound of Cinema
CHOICE 5-6pm This Classical Life Olivia Chaney
6-9.30pm Opera on 3 from NY Met. Puccini *Madam Butterfly*
9.30-10.30pm Music Planet
10.30pm-12.30am New Music Show

12 SUNDAY

6.30-9am Sunday Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12-1.30pm Private Passions
1.30-3pm Sunday Afternoon
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6pm The Early Music Show
6-7.15pm Words and Music
7.15-8pm Sunday Feature
8-10pm Drama on 3 Calmer
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified

13 MONDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
1-2pm Live from Wigmore Hall
CHOICE 2-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Elizabeth Maconchy
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff. Garcia *Zemira Overture*, Haydn *Symphony No.26*, Vaughan Williams *Five Mystical Songs*. Julien van Mellaerts (bar), BBC NOW/Harry Bicket
9.45-10pm The Essay Five Walks on the Wildside
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

14 TUESDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Elizabeth Maconchy
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Liverpool Philharmonic Hall. Roussel *Bacchus & Ariadne, Suite No.2*, Eleanor Alberga *Piano Concerto (world premiere)*, Shostakovich *Symphony No.5*. Alim Beisembayev (piano), RLPO/ Domingo Hindoyan
9.45-10pm The Essay Five Walks on the Wildside
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

15 WEDNESDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-3pm Classical Live
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm CotW Elizabeth Maconchy
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert live from Barbican, London. Monteverdi *Vespers*. The Sixteen/Harry Christophers
9.45-10pm The Essay Five Walks on the Wildside
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

16 THURSDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Elizabeth Maconchy
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert live from City Halls, Glasgow. Copland *Fanfare for the Common Man*, Chopin *Piano Concerto No.2*, Dvořák *Symphony No.9*. Ethan Loch (pf), BBC SSO/Michael Sanderling
9.45-10pm The Essay Five Walks on the Wildside
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

17 FRIDAY

6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Elizabeth Maconchy
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Friday Night is Music Night
9.45-10pm The Essay Five Walks on the Wildside
10-11.30pm Late Junction
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

18 SATURDAY

6.30-9am Saturday Breakfast
9am-12 noon Saturday Morning
12-1pm Earlier... with Jools Holland
1-2pm Music Matters Music on the Front Line
2-4pm Record Review
4-5pm Sound of Cinema

Musical evangelist: Gareth Malone wants the world to sing

TV CHOICE
Gareth Malone's Passion

First performed by Bach in Leipzig on Good Friday 1724, the *St John Passion* has been close to Gareth Malone's heart ever since he played the iconic Evangelist as a young music student – a somewhat propitious role for the nation's much-loved choirmaster, who could well be described as an evangelist for the power of singing itself. In this two-part series, he celebrates its 300th anniversary through the eyes and ears of eight untrained singers who set about tackling this demanding choral work. Participants come from all walks of life – including a drag artist from Port Talbot and a footballer-cum-flautist from Cardiff – but share a common desire to find their voice. Collaborating with a stellar band of professional singers including Roderick Williams and Nicholas Mulroy, Malone's infectious approach brings a fresh perspective to Bach's masterpiece, and is a testament to the transformative impact of music-making.
Available on BBC iPlayer now

CHOICE 5-6pm This Classical Life Arsha Kaviani
6-9.30pm Opera on 3 from NY Met. Kevin Puts *The Hours*
9.30-10.30pm Music Planet
10.30pm-12.30am New Music Show

19 SUNDAY
6.30-9am Sunday Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12-1.30pm Private Passions
1.30-3pm Sunday Afternoon
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6pm The Early Music Show
6-7.15pm Words and Music
BBC RADIO 3 **CHOICE 7.15-8pm Sunday Feature** Beatrice Harrison & Nightingales
8-10pm Drama on 3
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified

20 MONDAY
6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
1-2pm Live from Wigmore Hall
CHOICE 2-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Rimsky-Korsakov
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from St David's Hall, Cardiff. Caroline Shaw *The Observatory*, Abel Selaocoe *Four Spirits*, Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra*. Abel Selaocoe (vc) BBC NOW/Giancarlo Guerrero
9.45-10pm The Essay Self in the City
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

21 TUESDAY
6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Rimsky-Korsakov
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Royal Festival Hall, London. Wagner *Parsifal Prelude*, Beethoven *Piano Concerto No.4*, Tippett *Symphony No.2*. Seong-Jin Cho (pf) LPO/Edward Gardner
9.45-10pm The Essay Self in the City
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

22 WEDNESDAY
6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-3pm Classical Live
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm CotW Rimsky-Korsakov
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Bridgewater Hall. Dvořák *Scherzo capriccioso*, Hough *Piano Concerto*, Butterworth *A Shropshire Lad*, Elgar *Enigma Variations*. Stephen Hough (pf), The Hallé/Mark Elder
9.45-10pm The Essay Self in the City
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

23 THURSDAY
6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Rimsky-Korsakov
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Bridgewater Hall. Saint-Saëns *Violin Concerto No.3*, Sarasate *Carmen Fantasy*, De Falla *Three-Cornered Hat: Suites 1&2*. James Ehnes (vn), BBC Philharmonic/Juanjo Mena
9.45-10pm The Essay Self in the City
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

24 FRIDAY
6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Rimsky-Korsakov
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Friday Night is Music Night
9.45-10pm The Essay Self in the City
10-11.30pm Late Junction
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

25 SATURDAY
6.30-9am Saturday Breakfast
9am-12 noon Saturday Morning
12-1pm Earlier... with Jools Holland
1-2pm Music Matters Music on the Front Line
2-4pm Record Review
4-5pm Sound of Cinema
CHOICE 5-6pm Classical Life
6-9.30pm Opera on 3 from ROH, London. Bizet *Carmen*
9.30-10.30pm Music Planet
10.30pm-12.30am New Music Show

26 SUNDAY
6.30-9am Sunday Breakfast
9am-12 noon Sunday Morning
12-1.30pm Private Passions
1.30-3pm Sunday Afternoon
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm Jazz Record Requests
5-6pm The Early Music Show
6-7.15pm Words and Music
7.15-8pm Sunday Feature Everything Stops When I Play
8-10pm Drama on 3 Antigone
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified

27 MONDAY
6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
1-2pm Live from Wigmore Hall
CHOICE 2-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Vivaldi
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm In Concert
9.45-10pm Essay Instrumental
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

28 TUESDAY
6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Vivaldi
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm In Concert
9.45-10pm Essay Instrumental
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

29 WEDNESDAY
6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-3pm Classical Live
3-4pm Choral Evensong
4-5pm CotW Vivaldi
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Sibelius *En Saga*, Bruckner *Symphony No.5*. BBC Philharmonic/John Storgårds
9.45-10pm Essay Instrumental
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

30 THURSDAY
6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Vivaldi
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Radio 3 In Concert from Ulster Hall, Belfast. Shostakovich *Violin Concerto No.1*, Brahms *Symphony No.1*. Sergey Khachatryan (vn), Ulster Orchestra/Daniele Rustioni
9.45-10pm Essay Instrumental
10-11.30pm Night Tracks
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

31 FRIDAY
6.30-9.30am Breakfast
9.30am-1pm Essential Classics
CHOICE 1-4pm Classical Live
4-5pm CotW Vivaldi
5-7pm In Tune
7-7.30pm Classical Mixtape
7.30-9.45pm Friday Night is Music Night
9.45-10pm Essay Instrumental
10-11.30pm Late Junction
11.30pm-12.30am 'Round Midnight

QUIZ ANSWERS from p 144
1. *The Golden Cockerel*
2. a) Oboe; b) Cor anglais; c) Cuckoo whistle
3. A crow
4. Antonín Dvořák
5. Joseph Haydn
6. Heitor Villa-Lobos
7. The dove. Jonathan Dove composed *The Adventures of Pinocchio*; *Hear My Prayer* features the treble solo 'O for the wings of a dove'; and the Countess's aria is 'Dove sono' (admittedly, 'dove' in this instance means 'where').
8. Charlie Parker
9. Swan cuisine. 'Olim lacus colueram' is sung by a swan that is being roast for dinner; in 2005, Maxwell Davies made swan terrine from a bird that had flown into power lines near his Orkney home.
10. They all feature actual recordings of birds in the score, rather than just instrumental representations of them.

GETTY

VISIT **WWW.CLASSICAL-MUSIC.COM** FOR THE VERY LATEST FROM THE MUSIC WORLD

6 ISSUES FROM £9.99

Discover something new this Spring with our fantastic introductory offers across our diverse range of magazines. Enjoy 6 issues from as little as £9.99, conveniently delivered direct to your door.

GREAT REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE:

- Subscriptions from £9.99 for 6 issues
- Continue to make great savings after your trial period
- Enjoy easy and convenient delivery direct to your door
- **Never miss an issue of your favourite magazine**

YOUR TWO EASY WAYS TO ORDER

Visit **ourmediashop.com/SP24HA**

Call **0330 053 8660†** quote code **SP24HA**

SCAN ME

*This offer closes on 31st May 2024 and is valid for UK delivery addresses and by direct debit only. The discounts shown are savings calculated as a percentage of the full shop price. For overseas rates visit www.ourmediashop.com. Should the magazine ordered change in frequency; we will honour the number of issues and not the term of the subscription. You are free to cancel your subscription at any time – if you cancel within 2 weeks of receiving your penultimate issue you will pay no more than the trial rate. We run trial offers throughout the year to give our customers an opportunity to try a new title before committing to a long-term subscription. These are introductory offers, and we reserve the right to reject or cancel any application for a trial subscription offer if the customer has previously purchased a trial offer for the same magazine or any other magazine in the Our Media portfolio. †UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Mon to Fri 9am – 5pm

THE QUIZ

This month's quiz may ruffle a few feathers...

1. Which feathery opera by Rimsky-Korsakov was premiered in Moscow in October 1909?

2. Which instruments are used to represent the following birds: a) The duck in Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*; b) The swan in Sibelius's *The Swan of Tuonela*; c) The cuckoo in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*?

3. Which bird accompanies the narrator in Schubert's *Winterreise* song cycle, seemingly waiting for him to die?

4. Which well-known composer's hobbies included keeping pigeons at his summer residence in Vysoka?

5. After his death, the sale of which composer's possessions included his pet parrot, apparently brought over from a trip to England in the 1790s?

6. Named after the colourful bird pictured above, *Uirapuru* is a 20-minute symphonic poem composed in 1917 by whom?

7. Which bird links the 2007 opera *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, Mendelssohn's *Hear My Prayer* and the Countess's gloomy aria in Act III of *The Marriage of Figaro*?

8. Which legendary jazz saxophonist had the nickname 'Bird'?

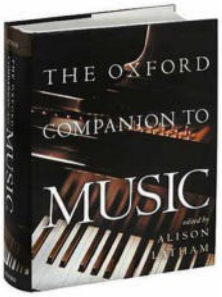
9. What links composer Peter Maxwell Davies in 2005 and the tenor aria 'Olim lacus colueram' in Orff's *Carmina Burana*?

10. And what do Respighi's *Pines of Rome* (1924), Rautavaara's *Cantus Arcticus* (1972) and Richard Blackford's *The Great Animal Orchestra* (2014) all have in common?

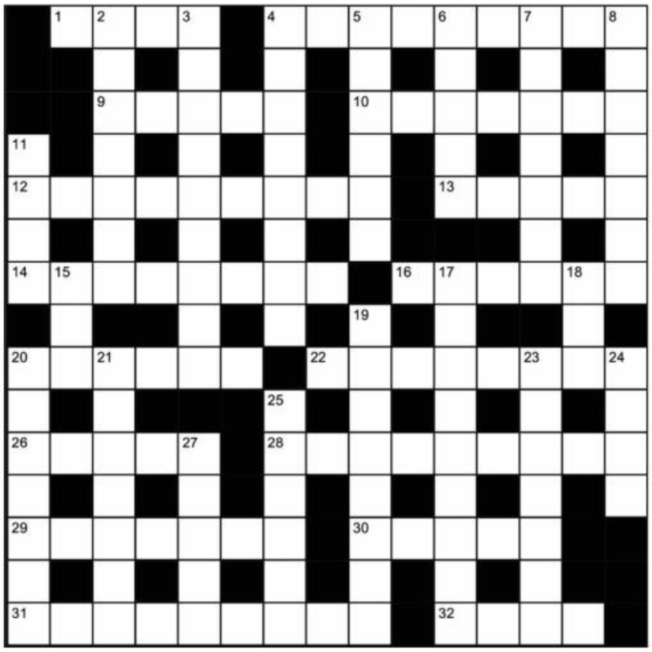
See p110 for answers

The *BBC Music Magazine* PRIZE CROSSWORD NO. 398

Crossword set by **Paul Henderson**



The first correct solution of our crossword picked at random will win a copy of **The Oxford Companion to Music.** A runner-up will win **Who Knew? Answers to Questions about Classical Music** (see oup.co.uk). Send answers to: *BBC Music Magazine*, Crossword 398/May 2024, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA to arrive by 14 May 2024 (solution in Aug 2024 issue).



Your name & address ....

....

....

....

....

What links the clues in italics? Think of a famous premiere 200 years ago this month

ACROSS

1 Short section of music covering end of piece – Haydn's 82nd? (4)
4 Middle-class British composer (9)
9 Senior British conductor (5)
10 English composer introducing bass to Debussy piece before end of concert (7)
12 Unexpectedly hum a clue about a forerunner of the clarinet (9)
13 Find first couple of trumpeters excellent (5)
14 *Librettist* (8)
16 *Anniversary piece* (6)
20 *First key word* (6)
22 Male solo from opera, mostly elegant, Mexican-style (8)
26 Sad feature of Athens familiar to composer of 16 (5)
28 Important part in accompaniment got Bilbao excited (9)
29 *Bass* (7)
30 *Alto* (5)
31 Cuts off half of finest scales (9)
32 Number of operas having some favour in Germany (4)

DOWN

2 Second bit of cello needing two types of wood? Nonsense (7)
3 Not initially disturbed about edition played a further octave lower? (9)
4 Fool taking mystic line about English composer (8)
5 *The real conductor* (6)
6 Scale: German's good, accepting A major to start with (5)
7 Like many summer concerts re piano playing (4-3)
8 Pose successfully displayed by Walton collaborator (7)
11 Contralto, in the main, upset expert performers (4)
15 French horn? Crikey! (3)
17 *Tenor* (9)
18 Remains in band after leader's dismissed (3)
19 Tense affairs involving bass drums (8)
20 Predict payment will involve rock star primarily (7)
21 Extract of Ravel: it is tailored for connoisseurs (7)
23 Tea and a smile for British composer (7)
24 I leave with King and Prince in opera (4)
25 *Soprano* (6)
27 Some disc enabling extract of opera (5)

FEBRUARY SOLUTION
No. 395

FEBRUARY WINNER
Irene Hicks, Inverclyde

Our Media, publisher of *BBC Music Magazine*, may contact you with details of our products and/or to undertake research. Please write 'Do Not Contact' if you prefer not to receive such information by post or phone. Please write your email address on your postcard if you prefer to receive such information by e-mail.

We abide by IPSO's rules and regulations. To give feedback about our magazines, please visit ourmedia.co.uk/policies or write to the editor at the address above (opposite, top right)

Please note: Because of *BBC Music Magazine*'s limited office access following the Covid-19 pandemic, there may be a delay in receiving your prize. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

NEXT MONTH on sale from 14 May (UK)

The 2024 Awards winners!

The moment has come... Join us as we announce the finest recordings of 2023 as voted by you, and interview the winning artists

Burnished Brahms: Alpesh Chauhan conducts the Serenade No. 2

GETTY, MARCO BORRELLI/FONDAZIONE ORT

Schoenberg *Violin Concerto* Brahms *Serenade No. 2*

Performed by violinist Ernst Kovacic, BBC National Orchestra of Wales and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

PLUS! *Claire Jackson* interviews composer ***Anna Clyne*** about her many influences, from dance to poetry; *Michael White* looks back at the scandalous premiere performance of ***Walton's Façade***; *Simon Broughton* celebrates 50 years of the ***Kronos Quartet***; and ***Isaac Albéniz*** is our *Composer of the Month*

Competition terms and conditions Winners will be the senders of the first correct entries drawn at random. All entrants are deemed to have accepted the rules (see opposite) and agreed to be bound by them. The prizes shall be as stated and no cash alternatives will be offered. Competitions are open to UK residents only, except employees of Our Media Company Limited, the promoter and their agents. No purchase necessary. Only one entry per competition per person. Proof of postage is not proof of entry. Our Media Company Limited accepts no responsibility for entries lost or damaged in the post. Entrants agree to take part in any publicity related to these competitions. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entrants' personal details will not be used by Our Media Company Limited, publisher of *BBC Music Magazine*, for any other purpose than for contacting competition winners.

ourmedia

Volume 32 No.8 *BBC Music Magazine* (ISSN 0966-7180) (USPS 018-168) is published 13 times a year by Our Media Ltd under licence from BBC Worldwide, Eagle House, Bristol BS1 4ST, UK.
© Our Media Ltd, 2024

Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT. Not for resale. All rights reserved. Unauthorised reproduction in whole or part is prohibited without written permission. Every effort has been made to secure permission for copyright material. In the event of any material being used inadvertently, or where it proved impossible to trace the copyright owner, acknowledgement will be made in a future issue. MSS, photographs and artwork are accepted on the basis that *BBC Music Magazine* and its agents do not accept liability for loss or damage to same. Views expressed are not necessarily those of t he publisher. ISSN 0966-7180. GST Registration No. 898993548RT

Distributed in the US by Circulation Specialists, Inc., 2 Corporate Drive, Suite 945, Shelton CT 06484-6238. Periodicals postage paid at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BBC MUSIC, Immediate Media PO Box 401 Williamsport, PA 17703

Our Media Company is working to ensure that all of its paper comes from well-managed, FSC®-certified forests and other controlled sources. This magazine is printed on Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) certified paper. This magazine can be recycled, for use in newspapers and packaging. Please remove any gifts, samples or wrapping and dispose of them at your local collection point.

Subscriptions and back numbers. Faulty CDs

Online subscriptions
classical-music.com
Subscription prices for one year (13 issues): UK £77.87 Europe/Eire £82.99 US $99 Canada $131.40 Rest of World £84.99

UK, Europe, Rest of World
BBC Music Magazine, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton, NN4 7BF, UK
Orders/enquiries/back issues
Tel: **03330 162 119**
Tel (Europe): **+44 1604 973 721**
Web: **ourmediashop.com/contactus**

US/Canada, Online subscriptions
Orders/enquiries/back issues
Immediate Media PO Box 401 Williamsport, PA 17703
Toll-free order line: **1-888-941-5623**
Web: **ourmediashop.com/contactus**

South Africa
BBC Music Service, Jacklin Enterprises, Private Bag 6, CENTURION, 0046
For sales prices:
Tel (+27) 011 265 4303;
Fax (+27) 011 314 2984;
Web: **ourmediashop.com/contactus**

abc Jan-Dec 2020 – 25,734

Music that changed me

Kent Nagano

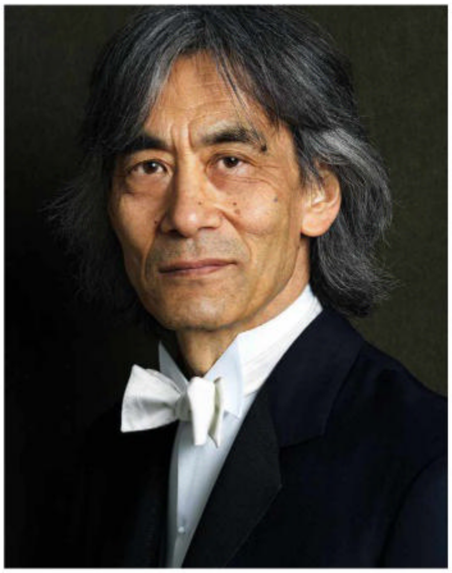
Conductor

American conductor Kent Nagano has worked with musicians from Leonard Bernstein and Olivier Messiaen to Frank Zappa, and orchestras and opera companies including the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and the Bavarian State Opera. He is currently general music director of the Hamburg State Opera and chief conductor of the Philharmonic State Orchestra Hamburg. His recent recording of Mozart and Poulenc Double and Triple Concertos, with his wife Mari Kodama, her sister Momo and his daughter Karin Kei Nagano and the Orchestre de la Suisse-Romande, is out on Pentatone.

I was introduced by my mother to piano at the age of four and when I became unbearable, I was sent off to a real piano professor, Wachtang Korisheli. He was a refugee from Munich who brought with him the European musical tradition. It was a life-changing experience to study JS BACH's Preludes and Fugues, not only because they are eternal masterpieces but because they allowed me to voyage away from my small-town limits. In my professor's studio I could visit Leipzig or Hamburg, all the places Bach, Mozart and Haydn were active. So rather than being stuck in Morro Bay California I got to visit Paris, Vienna and Berlin. I can't tell you what important choices that gave a young boy growing up, especially during the turbulent Sixties, to have that as a an option instead of trying to hang out with the popular people on the beaches.

Many of the cool people played in Korisheli's youth orchestra, and so under his guidance I also studied violin, viola and clarinet. We played BEETHOVEN's 'Eroica' Symphony and it made a huge impression upon me. It's so different when you are participating yourself, immersed in the score. Beethoven's music flies above any barriers; it is able to speak in a universal way, and in my own 'parkour', moving from the East Coast to the West Coast, to Paris, to Lyons, to London, to Manchester and Berlin, Beethoven has been a constant companion, along with Johann Sebastian Bach.

SERGIO VERANES STUDIO



The choices

JS Bach The Well-Tempered Clavier
Angela Hewitt (piano) *Hyperion CDA67741/4*

Beethoven Symphony No. 3, 'Eroica'
Gewandhausorchester Leipzig/Herbert Blomstedt *Accentus ACC80322*

Bruckner Symphony No. 9
NDR-Sinfonieorchester/Günter Wand *RCA 09026626502*

Ockeghem Missa Au Travail Suis
Tallis Scholars/Phillips *Gimell CDGIM035*

Messiaen La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ
Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra & Choir/Kent Nagano *BR Klassik 900203*

One of my earliest memories was being taken by my mother to the San Francisco Symphony, where my five-year-old sister and I, aged eight, sat for 87 minutes listening to Josef Krips conduct BRUCKNER's Eighth Symphony. On the five-hour journey home we couldn't stop talking about it! My friend and I went on to play the symphonies four-hands at the piano. Years later Günter Wand, a Bruckner expert, took me under his wing, and we were very close for his last 15 years. I worked with him on the Ninth Symphony and have all of his markings from his score. His perspectives in his interpretation are something I feel very close to.

In the 1970s I did intense studies in mediaeval renaissance music, assisting a professor on a critical performing edition of OCKEGHEM's *Chigi Codex*. As a composition student, working on Ockeghem's *Missa Au Travail Suis* gave me an intimate knowledge of such inventive writing, which allowed me to absorb very organically the concepts of modal and tonal counterpoint, among other things.

Browsing the shelves of the Boston Public Library, I became fascinated by the music of Olivier MESSIAEN and, having studied everything available, I wanted more. I wrote a letter to 'Professor Olivier Messiaen, Paris Conservatory, France'. A few weeks later I received a reply, and we began an education through correspondence as I conducted his works. Eventually he wrote, 'I see that the next work you will be performing is *La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ* – could I recommend my wife Yvonne Loriod as the protagonist?' It was through *Transfiguration* that we came to know each other personally, and he invited me to work on the premiere of *Saint Francis of Assisi*. I lived with him and Yvonne during the rehearsal process and during that year my life was changed. Messiaen was a musical and cultural father who opened me up to a world that I would never have entered otherwise – including encounters with Dutilleux, Boulez and the poets, painters and politicians who were regular visitors to the Messiaen home.

Interview by Amanda Holloway

EM RECORDS

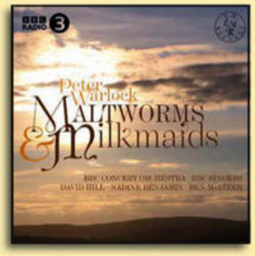
EMR CD085

LA BELLE DAME

ROGER QUILTER: *The Faithless Shepherdess*; FREDERICK DELIUS: *Petite Suite D'Orchestre no.1*; GUSTAV HOLST: *Ornulf's Drapa*; NORMAN O'NEILL: *La Belle Dame sans Merci*; CYRIL SCOTT: *The Ballad of Fair Helen of Kirkconnel*; HAVERGAL BRIAN: *Legend*; SIR ALEXANDER CAMPBELL MACKENZIE: *Colomba*

ALL WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

BBC Concert Orchestra
John Andrews (conductor)
Roderick Williams (baritone)
Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin)



EMR CD080

MALTWORMS AND MILKMAIDS

PETER WARLOCK AND THE ORCHESTRA

BBC Concert Orchestra
BBC Singers • David Hill (conductor)
Nadine Benjamin (soprano)
Ben McAteer (baritone)

EMR CD077

CHASING MOONBEAMS

Light Music Classics by RICHARD ADDINSELL, MADELEINE DRING, REGINALD FORESYTHE, SIR EDWARD GERMAN, BILLY MAYERL, SHERMAN MYERS, IVOR NOVELLO, ROGER QUILTER, STANFORD ROBINSON, CYRIL SCOTT, IRIS TAYLOR and others

Paul Guinery (piano)

Join us as a Foundation Subscriber to receive a free copy of each disc as soon as it is released, individual disc subscription benefits and a pair of free tickets to all recitals, launches, receptions, parties and events that EM Records organises.

Visit **www.em-records.com** for further details of subscription schemes, audio-clips and to purchase discs or contact Director **Em Marshall-Luck** at **em.marshall-luck@em-records.com** or on **07808 473889**.

THE SEVENTEENTH

ENGLISH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Four days of concerts, talks and events with acclaimed musicians including artists from South Africa and the USA:

- Michael Collins and the BBC Concert Orchestra perform Stanford's Clarinet Concerto and a Vaughan Williams Première
- Partsongs by Holst, Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Coleridge-Taylor and Cecilia McDowall
- Light piano music from pianist and Radio 3 presenter Paul Guinery
- John Andrews and the English Symphony Orchestra perform string orchestral gems

and much, much more!

24-27 MAY 2024

DORCHESTER-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk

Book online at: www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk/2024-may-festival/box-office.php

Or contact Festival Director, Em Marshall-Luck, at em.marshall-luck@englishmusicfestival.org.uk or The English Music Festival, PO Box 123, Clunton, Craven Arms, SY7 7BP for more information or a postal booking form.

PENTATONE

Mozart & Poulenc
Double & Triple Piano Concertos

In this exceptional family venture Kent Nagano conducts his wife Mari Kodama, sister-in-law Momo Kodama and daughter Karin Kei Nagano in vivid interpretations of concertos for two and three pianos by Mozart and Poulenc. The album was recorded with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande at Victoria Hall in Geneva and is a wish come true for the family of performers whose harmonic bonds resonate on and off stage.

NEW ALBUM!

PTC 5187 202

Produced by: San Francisco Classical Recording Company

Discover more:

Spotify · MUSIC · qobuz · amazon · Europadisc · TIDAL · prestomusic · DEEZER

www.pentatonemusic.com

Distributed in the UK by RSK